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“ Once upon a time the Emperor had a farm servant who was a serf. But the son of the serf went to school and learned philosophy. He sojourned in the big cities and came to know how his nation was kept in slavery. And when he had grown so old as to be in that stage of existence wherein bodily and mental powers generally begin to wane, he rose up and, unarmed and friendless, went wandering round the world. He rallied kings to war, overturned the Old Empire, and founded an independent State for his own people, over whom he ruled wisely and long even unto a very advanced old age.”

A comprehensive survey of Masaryk's life and work, from which the above extract is taken, is to be found in Emil Ludwig's *Leaders of Europe*.

*Books by Emil Ludwig*

BISMARCK

DIANA

GENIUS AND CHARACTER

GIFTS OF LIFE

GOETHE

HINDENBURG

JULY 1914

KAISER WILHELM II

LEADERS OF EUROPE

LINCOLN

NAPOLEON

ON MEDITERRANEAN SHORES

THE PRACTICAL WISDOM OF GOETHE

SCHLIEMANN OF TROY

SON OF MAN

TALKS WITH MUSSOLINI

THREE TITANS

*In Preparation*

THE NILE: THE STORY OF A RIVER





*V. S. Meser*

‘ DEFENDER  
*of*  
DEMOCRACY ’

MASARYK SPEAKS

*by*  
EMIL LUDWIG

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## FOREWORD

THE following conversations were held in the German language at the Castle of Lany, near Prague. The written text was subsequently revised by the President, who made only very few alterations; but he expanded the text considerably, especially in Part III, by the introduction of long passages dealing with theoretical problems. Where the spoken word has been maintained unaltered the character of the speaker is reflected in it. For, as is usual with me, on this occasion also I was not interested so much in describing the attitude of the statesman towards the various questions which he has to solve in his everyday work, but rather in giving a sketch of his character. This is done best, here as everywhere else, by direct oral expression. The large number of original and vernacular turns of expression, which still remain after the revision of the written text, show how quick and spontaneous were the President's replies to my questions.

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Despite his circumlocution with philosophical categories, a great simplicity of expression will be found in these conversations. The average boy of sixteen years will find every page in this book intelligible. But it will not appeal so well to literary people and other dilettantes. As usual, I have excluded such typical themes of discussion as Socialism, Freedom, Technology and so on. These bring everything to a monotonous level and turn a vivid conversation into a formal debate.

After having observed President Masaryk for several years and visited him, I wished to reduce to systematic form my conversations with him on political philosophy. During the past twenty years my written work, especially the political part of it, has consisted in the biographical portraiture of individuals and has left the State as an end in itself out of account. Accordingly, I found myself forced consistently to take the part of the opponent in my talks with Mussolini; but it was quite different with Masaryk. With him I found myself in full agreement on most problems, and so I was able to retire into the background, as it were, during the course of our conversations.

These talks with the greatest of Europeans are

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being published at a moment when democracy can do no better than arm itself to the teeth, as Masaryk has done in his own country. Having fought in vain for over fifteen years and having lost the battle at least provisionally, we Europeans must not rest content with the old pacifist slogans; but we must recognise openly that only a menacingly re-armed Europe will probably be able to deter Germany from waging war, because her officially declared aims cannot be achieved except through war. The person who refuses to change his political tactics in the face of such danger belongs to the zoological garden of the Platonists and not to the wild steppes of our days, where a savage animal may be encountered at any moment.

For this reason it seems to me that Masaryk's political ideas are for tomorrow rather than for to-day, and that they throw light on a future which for the moment is lost to us.

E. L.

MOSCIA  
*November 1935*



PART I

THOUGHT



## CHAPTER I

### PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICALITY

THE room was a suitable one for serious contemplation. It formed an angle on the ground floor of the Château. I had not been in this room during my previous visits. It was not bright, at least not in this winter light which had to struggle with the tall trees outside. And the solid rows of books that lined the walls from floor to ceiling, broken only by three windows and two doors, would have shed a monotonous dimness all round were it not for the fact that along the bookcases, at the level of the table, ran a wide shelf on which a large assortment of pictures stood. These were portraits in various sizes. They seemed to people the room with living faces and figures, even though one did not know them or pay conscious attention to them at all. The gigantic writing-desk might have served a tailor or draughtsman; but now it was laden with about a dozen stacks of books, all arranged in an



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orderly way, which is a general characteristic of the master of this house. In the centre of the desk, near the writing materials, stood a small single photograph. And over there beside the books there was a coloured photograph of youth, an arabesque which this man of thought had allowed himself—the picture of his wife and grandchild.

A small table stood close to the window, where the light was good. Beside it were large club chairs upholstered in leather. Here my interlocutor and I sat facing one another, in such a way that I could study his head excellently in the light and half-shadow. Properly speaking one ought to accompany an account like this with a long film roll, for the report of conversations can only give an indirect insight into the character of the speaker. Here the eye has to come to the assistance of the ear. I had before me a man who shapes his words with the expressive gestures he makes, so that he cannot be fully understood unless one witnesses the movements of his hands.

The world at large has been accustomed to take it as a foregone conclusion—and this was also my impression—that Masaryk is a philosopher who lost his way and found himself eventually dragged

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into politics. My former meetings with him did not entirely wipe out that impression. Otherwise I should not have divided the prearranged series of conversations mainly into philosophical categories and prepared metaphysical questions which are foreign to my own mental bent and in which I had wished to hold this thinker to a slow autobiographical unfolding of his thought. Moreover, this was the first time in my conversations with a statesman that I had to be afraid of his all-round erudition, in which I might at any time get badly stuck. My previous experiences with men holding political power were quite otherwise; for it was they who fought shy of the erudition problem and thus I felt that the advantages or disadvantages on either side balanced one another.

In certain forms of biographical portraiture it is best to commence with particulars and gradually come to the general features. Therefore I began with the peculiarity which marks off his career from that of all the other men of our time; namely, that during his whole career he has been creative both as Thinker and Man of Action.

“Among your published avowals,” I said, “there are very diverse confessions as to what you hold

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as primary and what appeals specially to yourself. You have objected to being called a fighter. You have been drawn into all kinds of public affairs, although you have wished only to study and persevere in the pursuit of knowledge. Does this signify a Platonic and inquisitive spiritual trend that was a fundamental characteristic of your nature at least during your years of youthfulness—up to the age of forty, let us say? For what could induce a philosopher, Plato asks, to abandon the fertile field of pure thought in exchange for a mere sensuous reality?”

I was surprised to find that this way of putting the question seemed to disturb him. With a youthful movement he suddenly swung round on the big chair, just as a horseman might in changing position on the saddle. He now faced almost directly sideways from me, showing the right profile in full light.

“That was due to the circumstances of my childhood,” he said, “to the way in which my life developed both internally and externally.” He spoke with a metallic resonance such as one rarely finds in a man who has passed his eightieth year. And thus he diverged immediately into the world of

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facts, away from the philosophical line I had laid down, as if he had never written a book on logic.

“To come to particulars: From the time I was fourteen years old I had to be self-supporting. My parents were poor. I wished to study. But at the same time I had to earn my bread. That is how it had to be. This resulted in a certain economic independence and with that a certain steadfastness of character, or educational development along a definite line: observation, the habit of being attentive and on the alert, a certain shrewdness. Very early in life I came to realise the value of Jesus’ saying about combining the serpent with the dove. That means Humanity, but in a practical and effective way. And I found pleasure in studying. At the opening of his treatise on anthropology, Aristotle states that all men naturally strive after knowledge. Even today it gives me pleasure to discover something new, in addition to what I have already learned. Always to be adding something fresh, in whatever sphere or direction, it is all the same to me; because the urge towards experience and discovery has been very strong with me, although not an end in itself.”

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He was obviously pleased at having rescued himself from the biographical current.

While giving expression to his thoughts he holds the long, thin hands together, the fingers interlocked. When he comes to the climax of his argument he releases them and shoots them upward and outward in a very forcible way. It is the expression of a man who has been stimulated to thought, who has been accustomed to draw practical conclusions and express them with a definite gesture.

“Seeing that you have lived for so long a time completely withdrawn from the real life of the world, you must have devoted yourself almost entirely to reading.”

“When I was eight years old,” he answered, “I began to read in our little village. The parish priest had a small library which contained stories by Nieritz and other such works, which he lent to the more gifted students. I read through the whole library. But it was not until later, in the big town of Brünn, that I came into touch with the outer world; schools and theatres and clubs and so on. Soon I purchased a French grammar and studied it right through; but I couldn’t manage the pronunciation. The local director of police had a young

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son to whom I acted as tutor. He used to take lessons from a French lady and I attended these. I could not converse with anybody in French, not even with her, and she did not know that I was pleased to attend the lessons. It was only after some years that I began to learn French systematically; but at that time I already knew enough to be able to read French. In later life I have often pondered over the problem of how many millions of optical impressions of the written word must have been received by a man of my years and how it is that the eyes hold out. Of course I have become short-sighted through the experience and I cannot distinguish anybody except with the aid of my glasses. But with them it's all right."

He laughed pleasantly as he indicated how weaknesses, little blows of fate and other difficulties, can be overcome. That little word of his about everything coming right in the end epitomised the wisdom of this man who is so thoroughly unemotional. I wished to hold him to the line he had taken and so I asked further:

"But where is the bridge that leads from knowledge to action?"

"Learning is active labour," he said. "Knowledge

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is capital in the philosophical sense. The striving after it is more socialistic. To learn is to work. What people forget is that study is labour, just as the work which I had to do as a smith. Thus it was that I became practical. I always sought to apply everything I learned. And that began at home, where I had to help towards the upkeep of the house. Later I took on manual labour, first for some weeks as a locksmith and then for a long time as a blacksmith. As a boy I was always active, always on my feet, always doing something whether at home or outside. Naturally there are many busy men who are not practical. There is a difference. There is a kind of practical and a technical scholasticism. I have often had the impression that in our industries there is a tremendous lot of iron-bound pedantry, that many of the machines are not practical. Just as there is a hair-splitting with words, so there is also a lot of useless scholasticism in the mechanical world. And then there is what in Austrian is called *G'schaftlhuberei*. I sought after the practical to the highest possible degree."

"If someone who did not know you were listening," I said, "he might think that you were an engineer rather than a philosopher."

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“As if the course of a man’s life is shaped by his theories and not by life itself!” he said with emphasis. “I am practical. Plato was my first and greatest teacher and I have always liked him best. But his idealism culminated in practical politics: he declared that philosophers must be the leaders. I said to myself that the meaning of life cannot be merely to soak in knowledge as if one were a sponge. That is only luxury, just pleasure-seeking. Something must come out of it whereby some new contribution may possibly be made to what has already been done. To do something—that is the urge which has always led me on, even up to now.

“You meant to suggest that I have lived for a very long time secluded from the life of the world and that I must have read almost everything. Not at all. For moral and political practicality it is enough to observe men carefully, letting observational comparisons take the place of experiment. One of the greatest failings in politics is that politicians do not learn by observation; they think and act too egocentrically. Instead of observing men as social beings, we have to-day a hurried and superficial reading of newspapers. I should like to know how many members of parliament and politicians



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in our day have ever read through any profound book on political science.

“A bridge from knowledge to conduct? You don’t wish me to discuss Voluntarism, the activity of the will, through which the philosophers since Schopenhauer’s time try to explain human conduct and the whole world itself. I am acquainted with these and other theories, but what I consider important is exact and active observation. For such words and *quid pro quo*’s I have no interpretation. What does Voluntarism explain? Nothing. And if you ask what is primary in the life of the soul, I make a distinction between what is of value in itself and what is active, the forward movement, and also what expresses the character which belongs specially to the life of the soul (whether it be this or that act of understanding, this or that feeling, etc.). The question whether pure thought, as it is called, leads to action, I answer in the affirmative. Of course, under the concept of *thought* I understand not merely the mental act of conceiving, but especially judgement and decision.

“In politics conviction leads to action. So from the world of ideas Plato appeared on Athenian and Sicilian soil. His teacher, Socrates, had prepared

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the artistic model for him, when he brought philosophy from heaven down to earth. Yes, the bridge from thought to action. To voluntary action belongs also the decision to act. We must will to act, we must make the end and the means clear to ourselves. Therewith we maintain mastery over things and our vision is not confused."

## CHAPTER 2

### RELIGION AND PRACTICALITY

THE Château of Lany, which is about an hour's drive by motor car from Prague, is the official residence of the President. As such it has a two-fold significance, for himself and for the State. It enables him to live away from the administrative activities of the capital and thus keep his mental outlook clear and undisturbed. On the other hand, the Ministers of State, and even more so the members of parliament, obviously find it convenient that their daily comings and goings are not subject to the constant scrutiny of the presidential eye. For these reasons it seems advisable that all Kings and Presidents of States should live at a distance from the capitals of their respective countries. In the special case of Masaryk it is fortunate that the President has been enabled to live amid those tranquil surroundings which are so necessary to a philosopher. The two days each week which he spends

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in the city are sufficient for personal receptions. When special circumstances make it necessary for ministers to consult him outside his official hours, they can visit him in the country without any considerable loss of time. Modern technique makes this method of government very practicable. The affairs of State can thus be directed from a distance, just as modern battles are directed from a distance of a hundred kilometres.

This Château, which the State purchased from Prince Fürstenberg, has only a short history. It was formerly a hunting-lodge. "And when we came here," the President told me, "trophies of the chase were stuck up all over the place in such a crowded way that one might get impaled while walking through the corridors in the dark. We still have hunting parties in the beautiful *Tiergarten*. Even at hunts and shooting parties one can learn. The phases of character thus brought out are psychologically very interesting, and also to listen to the stories on the art and method of shooting which so many of these great gentlemen tell at the evening meal after a hunt in the forest."

On the walls where the former owners hung trophies that had been so easily won by armed men

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against innocent animals, and along the corridors and in the living-rooms, there are photographs and prints illustrative of pagan art—of temples and gods, columns and torsos and goddesses—which bring the surroundings into harmony with the humanist spirit of the new master.

Because he had so graciously slipped away from the net of my philosophical questions on the occasion of our first discussion, I decided to fix his attention on the religious problem before we came to the endless theme of thought and conduct in another form. For he is fundamentally more a believer than a philosopher and more a practical Christian than a believer.

“If I have correctly understood the meaning of what you have written,” I said, “you define religion as the relation of man to God and morality as the relation of man to man. Therefore morality is something narrower than religion. For this reason I cannot understand why you always speak of religion as the most important concept underlying the life of the State. And humanity, which is a concept most closely associated to that of the State, you have declared to be ‘the true basis of success in practical politics.’ Therefore the Reformation, you

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hold, ought to be looked upon as the most intimate expression of the moral and national feeling of a people. What is the meaning of that?"

The way in which he answered this question and the many subsequent ones, as well as the tone of voice and the decisive gesture of the hands, gave the impression of a mind which has successfully striven to achieve its own internal clarity, with the result that now it does not tolerate any haziness in regard to these critical problems, and thus it can express itself all the more simply and clearly.

"For me," he began, "Jesus is religion. I have formed a very definite idea of Him from the gospels and ancient writings and I have adopted His supreme commandment as my rule of life. It has two poles: Love God and love the neighbour. Theoretical theology and ethics, practical worship and morality. I place the life of Jesus before me. He works from early morning until evening for the people with whom He is acquainted. He gives bread to one. He heals another. To a third He says something. He works. Thereby He is conscious to Himself that He is one with His God. Very few ceremonies and no hair-splitting of the learned scribes, no logical demonstrations. He does not pray in public, not

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even in the presence of His disciples. He goes apart from them. *Pray in thine inner chamber.* The whole of theology is in His Lord's Prayer, very little eschatology. For me that is Jesus. The joining together of religion and humanity. And then I take that passage in John's epistle: *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?* (1 John iv. 20). This way of expressing the relations between God and man, between religion and morality, may be interpreted in the sense that morality is the more important. For Jesus, God is the Father, therefore a moral, intimate relation; but God is the specific object of religion. As a theist, I construe the concept of humanity in the religious way, living faith in a living God. What does that signify? The difference between theology and metaphysics (philosophy) and religion. Theism is a hypothesis, side by side with the pantheistic and other hypotheses. That is not religion. It was not a religious attitude on the part of Voltaire when he would have invented God if He did not exist. That is only philosophical theism and anxiety for the enlightenment of the mass. Theism first becomes religion when I feel

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myself as a part of the world whole in personal relation with God; when I feel that there is Someone Who cares for the Whole. Therefore what is essentially religious is in the experience of this relation, in this feeling of security. If we insist too much on the dogmatic, the conceptual, the Catechism, as happens with mechanical religious instruction in nearly all the Churches, that is seldom religious. Even as a boy I could not bear the idea of religious instruction in the school. To get marks in religion, as in mathematics! That is too small, too narrow."

"The Son of Man," I said.

"Jesus was a man, a prophet, and therefore I can love Him. Towards God, however, I have reverence. I always have that feeling terribly strong. But to love? That sounds too anthropomorphical to me. I have closely observed orthodox believers who think that they love God. I doubt whether man can love God, anyhow it must be a special kind of love, love in its pure essence, which man cannot grasp. My child, my wife, my friend, my neighbour—yes. But God cannot be pictured in the mind, and when I take the command to love God as the highest command of Jesus, this love must



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mean something different from the love of one's neighbour. Love of one's neighbour—that is for me the naturally given sympathy with the men who stand beside me, my fellow-men; therefore it does not need to be proved."

I have refrained from trying to put style on his simple way of talking. This simplicity of his was all the more of a surprise to me because for years, day in day out, he has sat there reading theology, a science which he mistrusts the whole way through. It made me recall to mind the toploftical and complicated exposition and the arrogant manner of certain famous moral philosophers and scientific theologians whom I have met here and there. How little Masaryk seeks after effect and how unconscious he is of the effect produced by his statements was now shown when he took down a manuscript in which he had set forth in nineteen or twenty logically connected points his attitude towards religion as a theist, a criticism of the Christian denomination, the relation of religion to morality, the conflict between theology and science. He intends to publish this manuscript elsewhere. As I could not make much progress along this pragmatic line of thought, I returned to the idea of revealed truth, which he

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had dealt with again and again in the above-mentioned manuscript, and sought to stimulate his mind by quoting Plato. He was imperturbable.

"I take account of two revelations: the old Jewish revelation, which was a formulation of theism—monotheism, of course, the law and the prophets. But I also take the Greek revelation into account, Homer, Phidias, Praxiteles, Plato, etc. From these two sources of the spiritual life of Europe we must nourish our own, not choosing between the one and the other. The task is to arrive at a conclusion that is above both. Not *café au lait*, not a synthesis, as Goethe sought."

"But why, then, a science of religion?" I asked, and pointed to the thousand sombre volumes about us which he had told me were works on theology.

"I want to know what they say and try to prove. These specialists are very weak in matters of religion. For some years now I have been occupying myself with theology and the philosophy of religion. The philosophers insist too much on doctrine: Schopenhauer, for instance, always speaks of the metaphysical need. *De facto* the most important thing is the religious need. Because ecclesiastical

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matters have fallen into disrepute, a Word must be found. The theologians want to stand in well with science in some way or other. They do not want to be looked upon as unscientific, but that is an attempt to take refuge behind Words. Not the service of God, but the service of the Word—that is the situation. The professors now make concessions to theology instead of to religion; the theologians make concessions to the professors, not to science.”

“Can they define much in that way?”

“An Englishman gives 50-100 definitions of religion, one beside the other. But in this sphere definitions state nothing. Here I begin by stating my attitude towards scepticism, and in that I am against Hume. This sceptic, who accepted only mathematics as assured knowledge, based his morality on natural sympathy. Hence I published his *Principles of Morality*. My dear wife translated this book, together with Frau Oeltzelt in Vienna. The scepticism of modern mankind, that is the great problem. It appears today as relativism, subjectivism, etc. Kant’s greatest service consists in the fact that he pointed this out and opposed it with the critical principle. Above and beyond all things, a thinking man must needs think. He cannot accept

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everything that has been handed down. On that account he will be critical, but not sceptical."

As Masaryk had thus gone back from the sphere of emotion to that of thought I brought forward the question of denominational religion and reminded him that he was born a Catholic and turned Protestant later. Here I found him in his element. One argument followed quickly on another as he answered:

"The essence of Protestantism is this continual process of reformation. Luther did the same as so many other revolutionaries. Against Pope and Church he founded a new church and thus he himself became a pope, and other popes soon followed him. That is the mistake. If a new church is not to become fossilised it must carry on the revolutionary movement. The Protestant of today is no longer a Christian but a liberal, a man of learning or pretending to be so, professor or pastor; too much scholasticism. For a whole week once I held a continual discussion with Professor Martin Rade, one of the moderns, who edited *The Christian World*. We were on a vessel coming from America. 'You are just a pendant hanging on a Jesuit hook,' I said to him, 'oscillating between the old theology and

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philosophy. The Jesuits carried out the Counter-Reformation in a practical way, you try to bring about the anti-scientific movement theoretically. You split hairs and subtilise and nothing comes of it all except something historical and scholastical; because you have no faith. You only feel the need of orthodox words; but you no longer believe in their meaning.'

"Catholicism has still the courage to be absurd. *Credo quia absurdum est*. Here there is no argument. But the liberal Protestant does not wish to appear absurd. And yet he is so in reality. To make the old teaching plausible he brings forward Kant and Hegel, to help him to swallow the orthodox pill. Such is the disordered condition of things in our time. The Catholic sceptic goes to church; there it is semi-dark, there are light effects, singing and music, principally physical impressions, incense, the organ, hymns, beautiful pictures and statues, priests in vestments, the ringing of gongs and tolling of bells, the Mass as an impressive drama. The mysterious character of religion appeals even to the sceptic through the very effective system of worship which has been developed throughout long centuries in earnest, religious and artistic contem-

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plation. A Calvinist church has nothing to show but the bare walls and the pastor in the pulpit, wearing his little Table of the Law (the clerical cravat). First and foremost, he must preach. The non-sensuous character of Protestant worship helps mental association; but the preaching of the *Word* soon becomes one-sidedly intellectual. The Protestant easily becomes a rationalist, the Catholic a sceptic. The disintegration of Protestantism into innumerable sects shows the individual and subjective character of religion. And religion is individual and subjective today and cannot be otherwise. The great question: Authority or the individual conscience in the religious sphere?

“The superficiality of the times is shown in the fact that where people pretend to be tolerant and liberal they are really indifferent. That is sheer unbelief. The atheist is not an unbeliever if he fights for his case. There is a militant atheism, just as there is a militant church. My wife’s father, an American, called himself an atheist. But he really was an agnostic and would get angry if anybody spoke against religion. He brought up eleven children in a religious way. As they grew up each chose his or her own church. Nearly all the sects were

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represented in the family. He did not discriminate; hence his tolerance."

I was somewhat dumbfounded as he concluded. The so-called atheist was the only person of whom this out-and-out theist spoke with warmth. In the face of such freedom from dogmatic belief I could not refrain from asking him why he did not become entirely non-denominational. I knew that he had been reproached with this.

"At that time," he said, "I was *Privat Dozent* in Vienna and was about thirty years old. I might have ceased to adhere to any denomination, because in Austria there was a kind of emergency religious body, just as there was an emergency civil marriage. Above all, I did not wish to arouse the impression that I was against religion or that, on the other hand, I wanted to lead a religious revival. If my nation and all the nations take religion in the ecclesiastical way I shall not play the part of the superman and take my stand outside the community entirely. Whoever thinks seriously and scientifically about religion is sufficiently isolated. Moreover, in case of my death I wished that my children should be brought up in a community that practised some religion. I chose the Evangelical Church because it

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was the nearest to the Hussite Brotherhood Church. Because I had lived as a Catholic and had inwardly grown out of it, I did not think it honourable to remain in that Church. It was not hatred that led me; but in this transitional time of ours the religious question becomes first and foremost a question of honour.

“I think every day about religion, but religion is not my strong point. My business is politics. I have nothing of the priest or prophet about me. I am religious, though I never thought of becoming a religious leader. But even the change from one denomination to another was difficult in the old Austria. Protestantism was officially proscribed. Officialdom, which believed in nothing itself, was against the change of religion because it had to be recorded in writing and stamped, and that was something which did not occur every day. Religious practices among the Austrians were quite supine. Their theology had little life; it was a marsh, as a man remarked to me who had written a criticism of Austrian Catholicism in the Catholic *Kölnischer Volkszeitung*. Protestantism assured me more freedom. It suits individualism and subjectivism better. In England I have closely observed several of the



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reformed sects, such as the Quakers at their silence meetings. I have seen how a person comes into a simple room, first stands for a while, then sits down, his mind quite turned in upon itself. In absolute quiet all awaited the coming of the Spirit, until one stood up who felt the Spirit in him. I often visited the House of Prayer, but felt no pouring forth of the Spirit. A silent living together and communion with one another. A beautiful religious communion between men with scarcely any ritual, and almost without a word. I understand how it was that in the middle ages people required pictures and statues and a complicated ceremonial, because the masses of the faithful could neither read nor write. The Creed was expressed through the appeal to the senses. And theology was supported by art."

Since Masaryk has often referred to the religious forces inherent in the Czechs, I brought him to the question of the Bohemian Brotherhood, saying: "Chelinsky, whom you quote so often, was also the son of a peasant and he went back to the Christianity of primitive times; but, quite the opposite to what has happened in your case, he became a sort of communist."

## RELIGION AND PRACTICALITY

"I do not belong to the Bohemian Brotherhood, who now have their church here," he replied. "I then chose the reformed Church which seemed to carry on well the spirit of our reformation. Of course I personally felt Calvin alien to me. With regard to Servet—he is a champion of tolerance, free thought and liberalism! But I do not forget that Locke would not tolerate atheism. To my mind Luther is too vulgar for a reformer. Inasmuch as I cannot think religiously entirely for myself, I need an example, and Jesus is that. The present-day Bohemian Brothers are orthodox. But Comenius, the last Bishop of the Brotherhood, placed education in the first place, the school and not the church. We Czechs have always had a mixture of rationalism and mysticism, not always in proper harmony. The Czech is very gifted. He thinks practically. But he has always the inner mystic urge. Hence confusion, the formation of sects and disunion."

"Has he the same today?" I asked.

He meditated for a while, then laughed and said: "I have it. I am trying to bring it into harmony. I am religious, consciously, besides being a rationalist."

He made a pause, and in a manner which is very

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characteristic of him, he laid both hands over the forehead and the eyes, as if to collect his thoughts. Then he continued:

"Every religious man thinks. But the orthodox believer thinks weakly because after thousands of years he is content to think the same as was then thought. Thinking causes pain. On the other hand, I have Mill and some other philosophers before my eyes. Mill, anti-religious, utilitarian, a highly respectable man but one in whom the religious sense was lacking. Without religion even the best of natures will be incomplete."

"What you have said about Comte is much finer," I broke in. "He wished to link the religious instinct not with God but with mankind."

"Comte was and remained at heart a Catholic," he answered. "A type. He took over the whole Catholic system of worship and made a God of mankind—pure fetishism. He himself became arch-priest of the Great Being, of Mankind." He paused a little and then said suddenly: "The fact is that thinking alone on the world and life, the construction of hypotheses, explanations of life—these are not enough. One must have values and a conviction, which means a faith for which proof can be given."

## RELIGION AND PRACTICALITY

If I am once convinced, then I will go through thick and thin."

"Which Faith? That is the question," I said. "When you were thirty years old you said that one must choose some practising sect in order to be able to remain a Christian; but then one must find a new religion in it. Now that you are in the eighties perhaps you would say what your conclusive opinion on that point is."

"I will explain," he replied promptly, "what my religion is and my relation to Jesus. It is that we live in eternity. For me eternity does not begin just after death; but now, where we are thinking together, is eternity. And so after death I imagine there will be some sort of progress, but I cannot tell what it will be. Because the soul has been accustomed to live together with the body, at first it will not be able easily to find everything at rights for it. I imagine to myself a period which will be somewhat dark, but I do not know how. Then a continuation of the previous existence. Naturally I do not consider what they call Heaven to be a place where we can romp around and enjoy ourselves, as it is pictured to us. I do not believe what the topographers say of Heaven and Hell. Life might some-

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times be a bit hard there; I do not know. I imagine that there will be some kind of development which will have its crises and its failures. I do not know. Probably I think about it too anthropomorphically; but no man, even were he the greatest philosopher or scientist, can creep out of his own skin; and thus far, the Myth, which is anthropomorphism, is natural even though the understanding is against it. I often thought to myself: Will you meet Plato or Goethe? I believe so. But I do not know what our relations to one another will be. Anyhow I shall say to Goethe: 'I have read all your things and therefore we need not talk about them. Tell me something about your experiences here.'

"The chief point that I wish to emphasise is that if I am a partaker in an eternal existence, that fact must be my rule of conduct towards my fellow-men. I take everybody to be what I am myself. I should call that religious democracy. Soul to soul. To one who is eternal, eternity cannot be a matter of indifference. That is the basis of my co-operation with my fellow-man. As a theist, I must believe in Providence. I am firmly convinced that my life is not wholly of my own planning. A phrase from Shakespeare comes to my mind:

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Our indiscretion sometime serves us well  
When our deep plots do pall ; and that should learn us  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will.

“And so you will ask: What is religion? In his Hymn to Love, Paul has placed Love above Hope and Faith. I should put it in this way: Every honest man who meditates on life and the world will include himself in the All, the Cosmos. Order and meaning, he will find, and not a conglomeration of chance units. The feeling that results from this way of treating life and the world will be rich in hope and will consider itself the co-operator with God, who creates and orders the world, and not only in one's own interest but in the interest of one's neighbour. Theistical Humanism. For me, religion is not a blind authoritarian belief, but a conviction as to the existence of God and the immortality of the individual, with Hope arising therefrom, and Courage through all the vicissitudes of life. Religion is a feeling for the world and life. Philosophy and theology are *Weltanschauung*—an outlook on the world.

“Politically it is important that religion sanctions morality and therewith rules everything, even political conduct. Religion works in a socialising and

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organising way. So the Catholic (I look upon orthodoxy as Catholicism) and Evangelical Churches are founded on it. The Churches establish and direct the social order, side by side with the State; and so the relation between Church and State becomes one of the greatest political problems.”

## CHAPTER 3

### KNOWLEDGE OR ACTION?

THE last and rather astonishing confession did not bring me any nearer the solution of the main problem; because religious consciousness lay at the foundation of his thought as well as of his action. And though this of itself was active, it need not necessarily have found its expression in social leadership. Neither Plato nor Jesus had set him on the road that necessarily leads to politics. And yet Masaryk feels that he has been led into politics by both these teachers. Therefore on another day I sought a third way, which was that of presenting to him the problem of philosophy and action from the standpoint of inner motives and emotional feeling. I found him sitting at our little table in the sunshine, his face looking very bright. It was neither old nor young but literally a timeless face, in perfect harmony with God. There was a slight twinkle in the eye, as if to say: What the devil are



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you going to produce from the hat now? In his case it is easy to forget that one is speaking with the President of the State, just as it is easy to forget that he is one of the foremost thinkers of the day. Therefore one can begin to argue with him as if it were for the fun of the thing. Did he always have that internal balance which his features now showed?

"In my reading of history," I said, "I have never found an active life that was not influenced by ambition. Of course this can easily lie hidden in the wish to do something useful. As a matter of fact, do you believe that there can always be a clear-cut division between personal and objective motives? In your book on suicide, which you wrote when you were thirty years old, you asked what it is that takes up our thought. *Plans, innovation, reform. What do we feel? Allurements, illusions and disillusion.* Thus you wrote. It almost recalls Byron. Romantic words, therefore emotion, which generally stimulates one who is of an ethical nature."

"Between the ethical and romantic aspects I see no opposition," Masaryk replied. "My ethics are all embraced in the love of my neighbour. There are several grades of ambition. You may be right.

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I believe that I have often had a certain kind of ambition, and still have. Once I have proposed a thing to myself I want to see it through. I look forward to the pleasure which the achievement brings me, but I do not yearn for outside acknowledgement."

"But a youth?" I said. "Supposing one wants to make a name for oneself?"

He put his hand to the short-cropped white beard and said: "During early youth, up to the age of twenty, one is just a clown. One does all kinds of stupid things, quite unconcernedly. But that does not really come from inside, from boredom or awkwardness. One does not know the ways of the world. There is undoubtedly a certain amount of ambition. All depends on what kind it is and how intense it is. I should rather not call it ambition. There is pride. There is a sort of self-esteem, self-consciousness, that is not pride and ambition. Where a man is conscious of his own manliness. Here I am entirely at one with the ancients, with Plato. A virtue which is parallel to the Christian virtue, this manliness, from childhood up."

"And yet," I said, "you explicitly object to the idea of taking things for granted. You have come

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out voluntarily as a manly protagonist on the side of truth. For thirty years you were a professor, but coming before the public over and over again to take the side of the opposition as a reformer, a rebel of the soul. Your professorial career was something different from the ordinary, because your influence extended from your university chair far into the heart of the nation. There are hundreds of anecdotes which tell of how you wished to influence your students or the rulers of the State. You even say that you published your books in an unfinished form, because you did not like them. And you call yourself a bad teacher because you have always educated yourself. And you admit that you do not like speaking in public. You are too logical not to recognise this contradiction, at least now when you look back on it."

"Contradiction," he repeated, without the interrogatory accent. "I was an unruly youngster, you know. The village and certain peasant characteristics have still remained with me, also a certain nonchalance in my bearing, always a child of nature. I have taken part in many controversies; but I always trembled when I had to lecture. I used to have a large audience of students; but often I

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halted and asked myself: Have you really something to say to these young people who have their mouths open? NO? Then I excused myself, packed up and went off, even though I had been prepared. If I were given a subject at a public meeting, such as universal suffrage, then I managed better. But on ethical questions and such things I often felt that I had nothing to say. And even today when I have to speak in public I have the feeling: Can I?

“And it is just the same with reading. Of course I have read a lot; but I often read books for the purpose of stimulating my own train of thought. I measure my ideas with those of the book and compare them. Therefore I do not read scientific works from A to Z. At first I scan the contents and index to see whether there is something there and also lest I might miss an important chapter dealing with matters I am thinking about. I have not been educated through scientific books. Mark well that I make a distinction between education and instruction. In Plato the interest was not that of learning something new. Here was life and a philosophy of life. In travel descriptions and anthropology I am interested in the facts. Side by side with this there was always the striving towards a

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clear view of life and of the most important things that matter, and the acquisition of something new.

“And so with a book that one writes. When I think of Kant I realise that for such a system one needs a very strong talent, which I did not have. In order to write I must have a personal interest. I have never felt the need of formulating a system. Just as I have been drawn into controversy, I have been drawn into thinking by compelling circumstances. Somehow or other things have always been wrung out of me. But I have a system, for my inner self; the personality, the character, the man is the system.”

“But as member of parliament? Why did you have yourself elected if you were not going to throw yourself heart and soul into the work?”

“Of course I wanted to do so,” he said emphatically. “In parliament I had quite another feeling. Here I was no longer a teacher. I had something to do and I wanted to do it, to uphold the right. That is the fighting nature asserting itself. In parliament I was facing men, in class I was facing youngsters. The average professor is always in peril because he is supposed to know everything. That never troubled me. To questions from my students I

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often answered simply that I did not know. I was never a sort of lexicon, shy of being opened. Nor did I want to be a professor who dispensed philosophy as if I were pastor in charge of the college youth and preaching to them five days a week. In parliament I had to defend a right. The purpose, matter and meaning of what has to be advanced there is quite different."

"Then why did you resign your constituency?" I asked.

"After two years I saw that I was not yet ripe for the work. I had just turned forty. If I wanted to become Minister of State at that time I could not have done so with a good conscience. So I resigned my constituency and began to take stock of my political knowledge and capabilities, to go through everything, to read widely, to try to get a complete understanding of things and study everything again from the ground upwards. I spent fifteen years on this work of revision. Then I went into politics properly for the first time. As a preparation for it I felt that I must be clearer and more definite in order to have effect. Not from ambition. There was political work and collaboration to be done. Plato says that the true politician, the states-

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man, must be commanded to his office. This means that not ambition, nor the striving after power and money, ought to lead a man to take up politics, but rather the urge to fulfil his vocation.

“Talking about my book on *Concrete Logic*, a colleague said to me that *au fond* politics are organised knowledge. My book *Suicide* is a philosophical history. In that book my whole mind and character is expressed.”

This extraordinary book takes the problem of suicide rather as a peg to hang other things on. I had read it not so much for the sake of the questions treated there, but rather to come to know its author. I now asked him what was the origin of these investigations.

“I was seven years old,” he began again—for he is always fond of harking back to his young days, though here it meant covering a span of seventy-five years. “I heard of a servant boy who had hanged himself in the doorway of the stable. He was a stable boy. I did not know him; nor did I know the reason that had led him to this act, nor did I see his body hanging there. He was working on the imperial estate where my father was employed. I did not go into that stable again, or

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through the door. It was taboo and I never spoke to anybody about it. How is it possible for a man to abandon life of his own accord, to hang himself? That question was persistently before my mind. Then I saw a book which had been written by a Catholic moralist and which treated of apparent death. There I found the case of one seemingly dead who strangled himself in the coffin with his death shroud, while another continued to live. The latter fed himself on the various beasts which fell into the vault and he licked its damp walls for moisture until the next funeral arrived, when he was discovered and rescued. This clinging to life pleased me (though not the kind of nourishment on which it was supported), whereas the suicide was absolutely against nature and contrary to human instincts. Thus it was that suicide became a great problem for me. Even as a boy I used to analyse the character of that class of persons who were disgruntled with life. Later I discovered how it permeates so much of literature."

"A boy who analyses?" I asked, "and who now after two generations is recalling the village and the natural life of the countryside?"

Such interruptions, which are made as feints to



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stimulate a person, are excellent for bringing out the real character of one's interlocutor. Only a man who has full confidence in himself withstands them unmoved. Masaryk, who has practised self-analysis systematically throughout his long life, was surprised neither by the tone of what I said nor by my way of putting the question.

"I am entirely an objective character," he replied calmly. "I am a theist and therefore against suicide and against neuroticism. The modern type of man, such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, is too subjective. Hence pessimism and insanity. I have studied lunatic asylums in order to understand all this better, and for two semesters I attended lectures in anatomy and physiology, so that I could read medical books better and also for the study of psychology from the physiological standpoint. The savage is lost in Nature and meditates very little on it. I have something of the savage in me. I am not a city man. Even when I analyse I remain normal and do not become morbid by thinking."

I was somewhat surprised at this. What struck me as remarkable was not so much the words themselves, but rather that they should come from so definitely analytical a person. They showed once

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again how in this man of thought everything leads to action.

“With Russia it is similar,” he continued unexpectedly. “There everything is primitive and objective. But the intellectuals become prematurely Europeanised and subjectivised. So Dostojewski is subjective and therefore morbid. Primitive people are also subject to mental derangements. Probably through the physical strain of overwork. Also savages and those who live merely by the game that they kill. But their mental troubles are quite different from those which civilised city people have. The latter become mentally unsound because of their perpetual introspection.”

I returned to the topic of suicide and questioned him about the development of his investigations.

“Dostojewski had a lot to do with it. In the year '82 a young Russian came to us in Vienna when I was *Privat Dozent*. He was interested in philosophy. He spoke of Dostojewski, who had died the year before. Then I learned Russian and read every word that Dostojewski had published. It took me two years. Dostojewski wanted to portray the man of the future, but failed. Faust had affected him.

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In the character of Aljoscha he sketches the future type of mankind, a bloodless scarecrow. Through Dostojewski the philosophical aspect of murder became clear to me. Death as the contrary of suicide, the objective against the subjective; death and suicide as two opposed verdicts and sentences on the world and mankind. I have analysed Dostojewski, because he has given the most definite portrayal of the anarchy and superficiality of our time. I see two poles: How can I act towards my fellow-man? I can like or hate him, and indeed murder him. And myself? I may be pleased with myself or kill myself. The suicide is the subjectivist, the murderer the objectivist. Neither is anchored in God. I found the murderer also in Goethe; for Faust becomes a murderer. But Goethe did not have an adequate insight into the problem. De Musset saw it more in detail; the cultured man sceptical about himself and endeavouring to objectivise himself. Rolla wanted to throw himself on the body of his beloved, but was held back by the Cross on her bosom."

In such moments he speaks in a very low voice and looks upwards in an unusual way, the green eyes looking like those of a bird. Some years pre-

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viously I had spoken of Goethe to him and thought he had a certain antipathy to the German poet which he could not or would not overcome. I asked him now why he made so much of the murder theme in *Faust*; for there it plays a very unimportant part. According to his usual manner, he immediately went into the whole problem.

“Goethe was my teacher, as well as Plato and others. I became acquainted with Goethe when I was in the Gymnasium. I did not have enough money to buy all his works then, so I bought the poems. In these I saw how he gave form to the language, as Michelangelo carved his statue from the block of marble. See what he has made of the German language! It is not naturally a pleasant-sounding and musical language, like the Italian. Here the speech-moulder comes in, the singer who brings it to musical expression.” At this point he recited some passages from *The Singer* and *The Fisher* as examples. “Then when I had money I bought a complete edition, in six two-volume books; and I read them all.”

“And when did you begin to form your criticism of him?”

“I began the study of German literature with

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Lessing, and through him I acquired a definite critical attitude.

“If I quarrel with Goethe it means that I have a quarrel with myself; and in this quarrel Goethe can help me. I see his greatness, his striving after truth in life and in thought; but I do not close my eyes to his weaknesses; how he makes a problem of what is no problem at all. Because of his egoism, he could not penetrate to the simple truth in the most serious of life’s problems; but he had the courage to avow it. He could not point out how Faust evolved one soul from two. Faust did not achieve this harmony while his powers of vision still remained to him. He did not see the truth until he became blind. And so the portraitist of our inwardly disintegrated time is without unity himself, precisely because he is so truthful. And yet you see how Faust was rescued from suicide by recalling to mind the religion of his childhood. After a long time Gretchen helped him out of his subjective morbidity. When his objectivism was restored to him he murdered Gretchen’s brother without premeditation. Dostojewski analyses the premeditated murder; but he does not treat suicide so systematically. Neither Goethe nor Dosto-

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jewski adequately understood the fundamental problem of our transitional era. Dostojewski had the world of Russia before his eyes and especially the Revolution. He saw much but he did not see the Whole."

"I thought Goethe might have served you as a guide," I broke in, "because who else has so clearly traced the transition from thought to action, and who else has lived both the one and the other as he has done?"

He immediately left his own line of thought and followed mine. "Goethe's school of human conduct was the small Court and its officials. That helped him, but only up to a certain point. In the second part of *Faust* he becomes political; but in practice he remains the superman, as before. He rules; he commands. Great plans, despising everything small. And at the same time striving to remain sound. For me the question was: How does he present our century? It is a great transitional time. We have no repose, no fixed and definite *Weltanschauung* such as the middle ages evolved when they were at their best. The modern era began with the criticising Reformation, in the religious sphere, the revolution against the Church, which was a great

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social organism side by side with the State. The political revolt followed in the French Revolution, which continued the work of Huss, Luther and Calvin. Everywhere the French Revolution was followed by smaller revolutions. With lots of people revolt has become a fashion and a business today. The question is: How far did Goethe succeed not merely in presenting the transition, the profound spiritual revolution, but also in conquering it? In his own life how far did he succeed in finding that unity after which he strove? That is my question in regard to the philosophical quest for harmony between theory and practice. Goethe has not given us a portrait of the inwardly harmonised human being who is yet to come."

## CHAPTER 4

### WHY FIGHT FOR TRUTH?

OUTSIDE there in front of the castle the two sentries pace to and fro incessantly. Each one has to come half-way and when he turns round there is a slight click. I find it difficult to accustom myself to these shadows. Instead of giving a feeling of safety, the knowledge that one is being guarded awakens a sense of constraint in me, here and in other such places as this. The light caps which these legionaries wear sideways on the head and their silent and easy way of walking make them quite pleasant; but they are guards just the same. There were Czech legionaries in three foreign armies, and in remembrance of these the civic guard wears three kinds of uniforms. The loneliness and silence of this great house, inhabited by so few people, and the absence of every kind of noise on the part of companions, together with the fact that one scarcely ever hears the sound of an



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approaching car—all these, especially when I am in my room in the big tower at night-time and look down on the shadows—confirm the feeling that one is on a romantic island where important people have come together for secluded discussions, watched over by the power of the State, which guards them but will not allow them at any price to depart from the island.

The man about whom these legends are woven often came forward in his young days as the champion of men who were guarded by the power of the State and kept in prison, just as was suggested to me when I was musing on this castle today. He himself has now become the State; but he was then the Truth. Has he really been able to keep his heart so young and his spirit so immaculate that a mission which has fallen to him as an old man is inspired and sustained by that which he fulfilled in his youth? This was not the moment to investigate that question. It would be better first to find out what he thinks today of that struggle which he brought to the knowledge of the world when he crossed the frontiers of his own country into foreign lands, already in the ripeness of his years; for thus we might learn a good deal about

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the consistency of his character or the changes which have taken place in it. Therefore I said to him:

"In all your struggles on the side of Truth one recognises the friend of the people whom the mob pursued as the enemy of the people. Have you by any chance remembered certain plays by Ibsen?"

"He was always too intellectual; Björnson awakens much more sympathy in me," he said.

"These heroes of the drama," I said, "become martyrs; but as far as you are concerned I cannot imagine any purpose arising out of such a background."

He made a wry face, by which I mean that he wrinkled his forehead somewhat, and at the same time shook his long finger in a deprecating gesture: "False martyrdom occurs too often in the political world. The morbid patriot—useless."

"On the other hand," I said, "you have always protested that you did not rush into the manuscript affair or the Trials. When other people induced you to come forward to fight for the cause of truth and innocence, why exactly did they choose you?"

"I did not seek the quarrel," he said, unmoved

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and firm. "It just happened that way. In Vienna a Dane had given some hypnotic demonstrations. I had read an old English author on this question. The Czech students in Vienna asked me to deliver a lecture at their club. I gave the lecture. It was written down and published in a Prague collection of lectures. The Czech University had just then been founded. A philologist, a historian and a musical scholar read my work and suggested to the university that I should be made professor in Prague.

"Here everything was foreign to me. I did not know a soul. The other professors were known to one another from the days of their school companionship, café meetings and so on. I first had to find my bearings. I was interested in the future of the new university. I proposed that a critical review should be founded. My idea was exact science against amateurs and dilettantes. With four associate editors, I founded the *Atheneum*. In the second number one technician wrote devastatingly against another. Great alarm: How could one be so treated who is an old authority in the technical field? And so the fight began. I made mistakes. I did not know the people and I was careless. Tactic-

## WHY FIGHT FOR TRUTH?

ally that was a mistake. So I raised opposition everywhere and then I had to defend myself.

"Had I not come to Prague but gone to a German university instead I should have written my books there. Here I immediately got the name of being a literary revolutionary, and even my students often had the same idea. They wrote that I wanted to destroy the gods."

"Such misunderstandings are not strange to me," I broke in. "If a writer makes men out of demigods his fellow-men feel insulted instead of being proud of their new colleagues."

"And here it was seldom a question of gods, but only too often a nationalistic way of talking," he continued. "One could clearly see this in the case of the forged manuscript. They wanted to prove to the Germans that we Czechs also have something like the *Nibelungenlied*. I saw that this was untrue, and I cannot be a party to a lie. I recognised the forgery. They were simply modern, romantic lyrics."

"Goethe translated one of them," I said.

"Yes," he interrupted quickly. "He made his choice as a great artist, and as a matter of fact that was a folk-song which had originally been taken

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from the Russian. In this controversy I knew only little of the philological side of the question." Here he placed the index finger of his right hand on the palm of the left, as if he were tracing the mistakes. "But the professor who taught the Czech language, and who was an expert in these things, compared the grammar of the genuine old Czech manuscripts with this one and found that the forger did not know the ancient Czech language. That was decisive."

"You followed his opinion?"

"In the epic I recognised the abrupt style of our modern times and knew that this could not possibly be an ancient epic. It resembled a telegram rather than the naïve, diffusive style of the ancient epics. I also had my opinion on the sociological side of the question, that is to say, the description of what was alleged to be an ancient social order. But the decisive point was the grammar and the absolute refutation furnished from reliable sources, such as the Russian folk-song which I have just mentioned. At the time of the forgery this song existed in a Russian collection which was known in Prague. It angered me to think that we should make a false parade of ourselves; it just made me angry. Our

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opponents called us men without a country, and some protested that we should not air our failings before the Germans, while others said that there had been other forgeries—the Ossian forgeries, for instance.

“During the rumpus this created, the *Atheneum* went more or less to the ground. Many patriots withdrew their subscriptions. I lost money over it.”

“Did the affair of the Jew, Hilsner, originate in the same manner?”

“In Bohemia a girl was found murdered. Her throat had been cut. Hence ritual murder. The court had already taken the matter up and sided with this view. I knew a very good book on the subject, by a Berlin professor named Strach, which had refuted this nonsensical theory long ago. That decided the question for me. But I saw no reason why I should come forward in the affair, especially as the accusation was being conducted by a group of anti-Semitic Germans in Vienna.

“Then a former student of mine, the writer Münz, arrived from Vienna.

“‘How can you endure to see this sort of thing going on? You must hit out,’ he said. Naturally I said, No. I was busy with other things. Then I

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read through the reports carefully—everything—and I saw what I had known already. I went to see some doctors. It was proved that the adequate amount of blood still remained in the dead body. I had already studied some anatomy and could hold my own on questions of medical jurisprudence. I wrote a pamphlet, not so much on behalf of the falsely accused Jew, but rather against anti-Semitism as an uncivilised and slanderous attitude.

“Then there was the devil to pay. ‘Masaryk is bought by the Jews.’ I had to defend myself, had to go through the whole alphabet—*b, c, d*. Always new attacks. Here, as always, I had been drawn into the quarrel.

“My habit of thought is of itself practical. With me theory and practice are like the rhythm of breathing, inhaling and exhaling. Goethe has said the same. Because I am not a theorist pure and simple, these people came to me for help. Herr Münz knew that. If I were a bookworm, he would not have come.”

“And against the slander which had been brought against you, you did nothing?”

He laughed. “I wrote that the heap of money which the Jews should have paid me for taking

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their side had unfortunately not been received by me. With the money, I said, I would build a lunatic asylum for some of the super-patriots. The story became so widespread that when my father came on a visit to Prague, he hung around me for a couple of days, until I finally questioned him. He was somewhat embarrassed and said: 'You got such a heap of money lately that you might let me have a few thousand *gulden*.'"

"Didn't your students defend you?"

"Some of them; the others were enraged. There were scenes. On one occasion—probably I had written an article or something like that—I found my large lecture hall packed full of people, some of whom were not students. They roared out: 'Hilsner! Money! Jew!' I went to the blackboard and wrote with chalk: 'Whoever says that I have been bought is a common liar.' That had the effect of muffling the sound-box. Then I came down from the professorial bench and walked among them, first down through the middle of the hall and then around it. I looked straight at them all; but the gesture had worked. They were silent."

He laughed heartily, as if relating a successful prank.



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“You laugh today,” I said, “but in your memoirs you write: ‘Today I don’t get angry any more.’ What can one do when he is slandered in his own country until finally he becomes soured?”

“That depends on one’s constitution,” he said as he looked at me amusedly. “Hume never answered criticisms or slanders; that is the one method. If I were fatter than I am—Hume had a good-natured *embonpoint*—I should have done the same. But I am lean, nervous and irritable, and you also. I often just retorted. But when something was put seriously to me I argued it. When stupidities and lies were brought to me I just laughed at them. When the German opposition in the Imperial Parliament accused me of high treason they were forced to take it back and the whole House was with me. In Vienna I was denounced as being opposed to German philosophy, which was true up to a certain point, because my inaugural lecture was against Kant. In Vienna I was again denounced on a charge of corrupting the youth through my lectures. Once I was prosecuted by the priests, on some stupidity or other, I forget now what it was.” He mused for a while.

## WHY FIGHT FOR TRUTH?

"You are said to have called the priests paid informers, whereby three hundred of them prosecuted you."

Suddenly he remembered and interrupted abruptly: "I know. Spies. I called them spies. From my students I knew that some of the clerical lecturers made all kinds of complaints against me. On that account I happened to say that the clerical lecturers acted as spies in the school. Thus the most I did was to abuse the clerical class, but not their religion. In order to have some grounds for getting me out of the university, they pleaded that I was depraving the youth. Naturally I was declared not guilty."

"Naturally?" I said. "Were not Czech priests burned at the stake for proclaiming such truths? And in our day are not such champions of truth being constantly murdered if they hurt the national pride? Because of this I ask myself whether in your own career or outside of it you have found models who have been a mainstay for you."

"It may be. Huss and also Zizka, the Hussite leader, impressed himself on me despite his excessive use of force. Chelcicky, Comenius, and their political methods I have always honoured. Then

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there were Dobrovsky, Havlicek—all these had to struggle.”

“And Lincoln?” I asked, because for a long time I had been comparing him in my mind with that magnificent figure of modern history. He only shook his head, thought for a while, suddenly brightened up and declared unexpectedly:

“Plato. Plato was a sort of a model, the theorist and man of action. Was sold as a slave! He was in Sicily for the purpose of getting Dion to accept his ideas. He had a bad time of it. Lincoln? Yes—inasmuch as I learned very much from America, from the form of democracy it has, from its literature and its whole cultural life. Europeans have much to learn in America and about it.”

I changed the scene from America and Sicily to Croatia, because I wanted to bring him to the affair of the Agram Trials, where his struggle for the truth had for the first time an effect on world politics.

“At that time you were almost sixty,” I said. “You had great experience as a member of parliament and had false documents before you which were not merely historical but actual, in the highest sense of the word. In this special case did you not

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enter the fight much more passionately and spontaneously than on the former occasions?"

"I did not like the idea of taking part in it. In the newspapers I read about the process on a charge of high treason which was brought against the Croats and the Serbs. I knew some of them. Then one of my former students from Agram came to me and said: 'Professor, you must intervene. The thing must not go on in this way.' It was quite inconvenient for me. I should have to go to Agram. Difficulties, and so much loss of time. Out of the question. I shall not go. But my importuner did not cease; and I went. I was quite confident of my case when I went. I recognised at the first glance that these documents were forgeries."

"How was it then that an experienced scholar like Friedjung allowed himself to be deceived? Were you suspicious from the start on account of your anti-Austrian sentiments?"

"Not at all. Only through the clumsy way in which it was written. The document was copied in large letters by a typesetter, so that it could be photographed. In the photograph I recognised the swindle immediately. But now I had to find proof

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of this. One must always verify subsequently what one has already assumed to be right. The verification was completely successful."

"But how was it that the gentlemen in the Ball Platz allowed you to act so openly?"

He seemed delighted. "Austrian slovenliness, superficiality, foppery. Dandies like this Count Berchtold. They are not worth getting angry about. But it enraged me to see a Great Power acting in that way against a little country. Even big dogs don't attack the little ones. I was angry too that men should be such liars. I went to Agram to attend the trial. I was able to exercise influence there. I went a few times to Belgrade; quite openly. As an Austrian subject and member of parliament I presented myself to the Austro-Hungarian Minister and I conferred with the Serbian Premier and his officials. In Prussia that would have been impossible. Then I got the *corpus delicti* into my hands—the forged original. It fitted the pin-holes on the door of the Austro-Hungarian Legation in Belgrade on which the paper had been fastened to have it photographed. After such palpable proof the accused had to be set free. I was delighted at having turned the tables on the Vienna diplomats.

## WHY FIGHT FOR TRUTH?

At that moment the practical struggle against Austria began.

“Dear God! People give too heroic a picture of a campaign against the wrong. Not a bit of it. One does it just because one has to do it.”

## CHAPTER 5

### BETWEEN A PEOPLE AND MANKIND

AND so we had the red rag before us—the old Austria. The point of importance now was, not to separate the national feeling of this European from the general human sentiments of the Slovack and define one or the other in cast-iron terms, but rather to comprehend them in their organic union.

How does this man, who has had such an all-round European culture, stand as the chief representative of a small nation? How did the opposition to the Germans develop in him and how far does it extend? I had read the following sentence in one of his writings: “A certain shyness always holds me back from pronouncing such words as *People* and *Fatherland*. I do not proclaim myself a patriot and I do not shout that the other fellow is a traitor to his country.” So at a subsequent meeting I plunged right into the heart of the question and began thus:

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"It seems to me that your European education has brought you to a closer understanding of your own people, or that you first began by studying other peoples; as a widely travelled man returns home somewhat late in life to seek and find a wife. Was that not a definite advantage to you?"

"I am not nationalistic," Masaryk replied, "in the sense of the present-day radical nationalist parties. Of course I was born a Czech, and I cannot undo the fact of my birth, just as the German has been born a German. Why should I be against him from the cradle upwards, as it were? But if he takes up a hostile attitude towards me, then I must oppose him. My patriotism is positive. It is very easy to preach hatred of the foreigner. But it is very difficult to get an understanding of one's own people, to criticise them and improve them. A professional patriot speaks unkindly not merely of other nations but also of his own fellow-countrymen who happen to hold different views from his. And everywhere there are heaps of patriots who make a profitable business of their patriotism."

"Was it in this spirit," I asked, "was it out of human feeling that in your forties you endeavoured to bring about a conciliation between the Czechs



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and the Austrians? Or was that dictated by political reasons?"

"In my early years I was not a radical," he said, "even from the national and political standpoints. Politically I have become more radical with the advance of age. The radicalism of our radicals often appears to me to be shallow, superficial. As a member of parliament in Vienna I observed the *Sumpf* (morass) at the Court. And the almighty aristocracy! Imagine that the future Emperor committed suicide. And I meditated a good deal on the problem of suicide. What more could there be! The relations between the Emperor and the Empress. The Emperor's relatives, how they all lived! I observed the Court and saw a good deal of the life there, and heard much from the Emperor's own entourage. Everybody knew the scandalous stories and told them to one another. But that was not sufficient for me. I watched, for instance, how Ministers of State came to be appointed. And what people! In this, the Prussians were far more shrewd. I need not emphasise the fact that I observed and studied Germany also; because Germany exploited Austria for its own ends. I spent years in Vienna, as student and *Privat Dozent*. I lived for a year in

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Leipzig and subsequently paid several visits to Germany. The Habsburgers—yes, I believe I disliked them very much.”

“Then to your mind did the past greatness of the Habsburgs explain their present degeneracy?” I asked.

“Some of the dynasties in Germany have rendered distinct service to the advance of culture. Politically and culturally the Habsburgers were always foreign to us, even hostile. Do you know why we have abolished the aristocracy in this new State? Three hundred years ago, after the Battle of the White Mountain, the Habsburgers confiscated three-fourths of the soil of Bohemia which belonged to those who were against the dynasty and divided it up anew among strangers from various countries. The Bohemians and Czechs and Germans who had opposed them were beheaded. Their heads were hung on the tower of the Karlsbrücke and allowed to rot there in order to terrify the public. In my mind I see those horrible skulls of the dead each time I pass that bridge. At that time Comenius was driven out. Thirty thousand families, which means about 150,000 persons, were forced to leave the country. They went to Saxony,

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Prussia and as far as America. Naturally the best; for the weaklings took refuge, as always happens.”

“All that is unknown in Germany,” I said. “If I stated at a national meeting that the Mark Brandenburg once belonged to Bohemia and that Königsberg was the royal city of the Czechs, I would be overwhelmed with laughter.”

“Compare Mommsen,” said Masaryk, “he wrote that the hard skulls of the Czechs had to be broken, and Edward von Hartmann, who wrote that the Poles had to be rooted out. Bismarck knew what he was saying when he declared: ‘Whoever holds Bohemia is master of Europe.’”

He gazed in front of him in a strange way and was silent. Then he said, with a very pleasant air: “Bohemia is a lovely country. The land is rich. The woods are good. And in old times the wealth of fish it contained was very considerable.”

The sentence sounded as if a king in a fairy story were speaking of his country. Then he changed his position, laying his index finger on his nose, in a manner that is characteristic of him, and continued: “On the other hand, the Alpine countries are naturally poor. Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Vienna and part of the Steiermark—these con-

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tained the industries of Austria. Inasmuch as industry signifies wealth, Bohemia was called the Pearl of Austria. The Czechs were also educated. Before the war there were fewer illiterates among us than among the Germans in Austria. Old tradition. Foreigners were astonished the moment they came into the country, because an old Czech woman could read so well."

"And yet," I interrupted, "you emphasise the fact that you have not founded the new State in the name of your old kings."

"It pleases me to be able to cite St. Wincheslaus, King Karl and Podebrad. Tolstoi, who had come out very strongly on the side of democracy, once said to me that a Tolstoi had been a great man—I do not know how great—under a Czar. It is pleasing to be descended from people who counted for something. But that was never my political driving force. I said to myself: We are now at a stage where we are worthy of freedom, and to support that, I can cite the names of Huss, Chelcicky, Comenius and several others. Just think of the magnificent beginning of the Reformation. There have been reformers always and everywhere, as individuals. But we were the first people who, as a whole, tried

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to carry out the Reformation, a hundred years before the Germans. That was the big gap we made in the middle ages, precisely because we did it as a whole people. On that account they were all against us. The Pope organised a crusade against the Bohemian heretics, just as against the Moslems. The Counter-Reformation, led by the Habsburgs, forced the people to resume Catholicism, and for Europe we always remain heretics. The Germans call us hard skulls."

From the tone of his voice I surmised that he must often have thought over this question, and I endeavoured to induce him to put it out of his head. With that thought in mind, I changed the topic from the oppressed Czech to his understanding of the oppressed Jew.

"In a speech which you delivered in the Vienna parliament," I said, "you finely declared: 'He who has taken Jesus as his guide cannot be anti-Semitic, not because Jesus and the Apostles were Jews and primitive Christianity had much Judaism in it. No. If I take Jesus as a guide I cannot be anti-Semitic. Either one or the other.' Have you ever met anybody who was a convinced and honest anti-Semite?"

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"Yes," he said quite emphatically: "I met a Jew. He was the purest anti-Semitic. He spoke of the incomplete character of the Old Testament, of the evil qualities of his race, and that Judaism must be culturally overthrown."

"And what did you think of that?"

"Nonsense. I stand beside Jesus, who as a Jew did not come to destroy the Old Testament but to supersede it by fulfilling it. You have maintained yourselves fresh for such a long time because you were a minority, which is very often more energetic and better than a majority. As with the Parsees in India, excluded, antagonised, always on the *qui vive*, so the Jew has become cleverer, at least more sensible. He has been forced into certain branches of commercial life; what else remained for him? The State would not allow him to take up what are called the higher positions. In Vienna I gave lessons to the son of a Jewish banker, and when he was grown up I saw how he did his military service as a one-year recruit and then wanted to become an officer; I saw how he was refused again and again, until finally a friend of the family succeeded in achieving the impossible for the boy at a card party held by Franz Joseph."

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“Don’t you think that the Zionists are more sensible in renouncing these honours and settling down in their own land?”

“Very nice, but difficult to carry out,” he said. “I visited the colonies and observed the sacrifices they were making. You are too few against the Arab. What would happen if the English weren’t there? Even the language presents a serious difficulty for them.”

“I hope that you are not for Esperanto?”

“I have learned too many real languages for that.”

“How many?”

He began to count on his fingers: “Czech and German of course, then French and English, but I should not dare to publish an English or French essay without having it previously corrected by an Englishman or a Frenchman. I thought that only the French had a tradition of fine speech. In London I saw that the Englishman has the same. When he comes up against turns of expression that are un-English he is irritated; not so the American. I can speak Russian well and write it a little. Italian I can read easily and speak it when necessary. In my early years I also learned Hungarian

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and Polish, and of course I understand the Slav languages quite well. In addition to all these, Latin and Greek, and I also studied Sanskrit and Arabic for a year. My ideal was the diplomatic service. I wanted to go to the Oriental Academy which was the educational institution in Vienna for ambassadors. Then I saw that they gave preference to the aristocracy. During the past sixty years I have forgotten Arabic completely, only now and then a word comes back. A lady doctor who was a Czech recently came to me from Bagdad. 'Isn't *Ma* water?' I asked her. In Arabic or Hungarian you can invent nothing of your own, as a German can do with the English speech, or as one can do with Latin when attempting to speak Italian, and so on. These Oriental languages have no relation whatsoever to our Indo-European tongues. One must commit everything to memory. I ask myself whether the Englishman does not think more freely and quickly because he is burdened with so few languages."

"Do you utilise these languages very much in your present position?"

"Yes! I read them and speak them a good deal. During the war I spoke only French, English and



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Russian. After my return I had an extraordinary experience. I was in the German theatre—an opera, I think. I listened and listened and I had an extraordinary feeling. Then after thinking over it for a while I said to myself: It's the German language, which I have not spoken during the past four years. Naturally—you hear a language regularly; one becomes strongly habituated to the meaning of the words as they are sounded. Therefore the spoken language is a very important political instrument. The case is quite different when one only reads a language, even though it be a living language. For this reason the process of denationalisation is so objectionable, so unbearable, apart entirely from the question of justice in the matter. In foreign languages I am more fluent with scientific than with everyday phraseology. When, for instance, French or English visitors came hunting with us, then I compiled a list of hunting terms, with the names of various animals, from the dictionary, in order to be able to enter into the conversation about the trophies of the chase. Why should I trouble myself about the poor animals?"

When he makes these little malicious *obiter dicta*

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he is very charming. A man who speaks more languages than most of the statesmen of our time—but the love of truth forces him to admit what all the others prefer to be silent about. His great strength of character makes it possible for him thus to speak freely. Because the language question played a decisive political part before and after the foundation of the new State, and became very important in the educational sphere, I asked him what was his attitude in early years towards the two languages.

“When still a child I spoke two languages,” he said. “My father was Slovack. My mother spoke German and, of course, Czech, because her parents were natives of Hana. Since she was born in the town of Auspiz, where the population was predominantly German, she had a German education. I said my prayers in German because my mother had a German prayer-book. We three brothers went down on our knees in the evening and prayed in German; and immediately that this was over we spoke Czech. My younger brother wrote to me in German, while I wrote to him in Czech; but we never spoke German together. In the primary school I had a few months of German, then Czech,

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and German at all the other schools. From time to time I used to compare the languages. At the grammar school I soon came to read Lessing, Goethe, Herder, Shakespeare and Byron (these at first in German translations) and so on—world literature. Later on I became acquainted with Slav literature. I liked Krasinski and Mickiewicz and afterwards the world-famous Russians. Several Italian writers too. The first French book that I read from cover to cover was a French translation of *Don Quixote*. Naturally I have followed our own literature and have compared it with that of the great heroic spirits. The literature of the world was a star-strewn firmament for me. This awe-inspiring firmament, of which Kant has spoken so beautifully, was not made up of only one or two great stars. It was clear to me even then that the restoration of my country's political rights was a question of justice and not of literature. My daily speech, what I may call the official speech, during the time of my secondary education was German; but with my school companions I spoke Czech. In the Czech workmen's societies I felt myself at home. In Brünn we Czech scholars were bigger and older than the Germans, because most of us

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had lost one or two years in learning German and I had lost these years while I was engaged in manual labour. So we were big rascals, the Germans small ones. We used to play boyish games and tease each other; but sometimes it came to open fights, which we always won, because we were older. Therefore as a youngster I had practical experience of the national opposition. I had read about it in history books for children and afterwards in newspapers and historical works I came to understand the meaning of the national conflict. I soon began to study statistics and history in detail so as to get a more exact knowledge. And this I saw led into politics. It was through his search after knowledge that Plato also was led into politics.

“Then in Vienna naturally the official life was German; but I always intermingled with my own compatriots. For a short while I was secretary of the Czech students’ club. We had lectures and sang songs, harmless things. But it was my introduction to folk-song. It is difficult to believe how a simple folk-song keeps the national spirit alive and brings it to one’s consciousness. Hence I used to theorise how far I belonged to two nations. Elizabeth Browning said that it is impossible. I can

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project myself into the German feeling, the English, French, Russian and Polish.”

Seldom does one see the simplicity of this man's character so clearly displayed as in these apparently trivial circumstances of his youth, which already showed fundamental and definite direction or marked out a distinct field for the subsequent unfolding of his mental powers. Following these confessions of youth, I now brought him to the third factor that played a part in his education, namely Russia, about whose civilisation he has written more than on any other.

“Russia interested me very much,” he declared, as he half-closed one eye. Habitually he closes one eye when he becomes reminiscent, and when he thinks he opens both out wide. “As a nation we were Russophiles. We believed that the Big Uncle would not sacrifice us to the Austrians. But I never thought or felt that way. Yet Russia and the Slav countries in general interested me. In my childhood I used to hear stories of the Cossacks who came to Czecho-Slovakia in 1849 against the revolutionaries. Then as a schoolboy I found an old greasy year-book which contained some information about Russian monasteries. I could not under-

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stand how miracles could happen in a non-Catholic country, and so this year-book was the sole reason why I began to inquire about Russia. After the battles and alarms of which we have been speaking, in 1887, I wished to relax a little and went to Russia. There I should be left in peace. I had studied Dostojewski, but at that time I knew only a little of Tolstoi. So that I need not read all he wrote, I decided to visit him and talk with him about his principal ethical thesis. I was often with him in Moscow, and afterwards at his country estate.

“Tolstoi and myself always used to disagree with one another. That is a characteristic of the Slavs. They disagree in order to discuss. My thesis: ‘I am capable of defending myself against the opponent and I must do.’ Tolstoi could not tolerate any contradiction. First of all he showed me a Czech book which had been published by the Russian Academy: Chelcicky, the greatest mind of our reformation, who wanted to overthrow both State and Church because both were powerful, and who for that reason wrote against the Hussite struggles and against war, had the same view of war as Tolstoi. Tolstoi was astounded to learn that his own thesis

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had been anticipated already in the fifteenth century. So he appealed to me as a Czech in defence of his thesis. We came to what may be called his arithmetical argument. 'I should not support any opposition against a Mongolian invasion,' he said, 'in case they overran Russia and murdered. If they met with no opposition they would grow lax and stop killing. For practical purposes that would be simpler and better, and fewer human lives would be lost than if we were to offer armed defence.' I said to him: 'We meet one another. You attack me with the intention of killing me, and shall I allow it without making a move? One of us must go under. So if I kill you, instead of allowing you to kill me, there will only be one of us killed anyway.' He did not understand that the whole spiritual constitution of an aggressor is quite different from that of a defender. Romain Rolland also does not see this truth, and the confused mind of Gandhi falls back on Tolstoi. If I see that I shall be killed, then I try to kill my aggressor, if I cannot manacle him.

"But Russia: Its culture interested me as a whole, and I endeavoured to learn something about its military strength too, and other things. At that

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time the military—that is to say, the officers—played a prominent role, which can also be ascertained from Russian literature. I had read political books on Russia, for and against; but I wanted to see the country and its people. Naturally I observed the religious life also, especially the monasteries.”



## CHAPTER 6

### THE HARMONY OF YOUTH

THE souvenirs of the past which anybody collects and arranges for himself are an index of his character if they are chosen with a view to strike the eye of the visitor. A certain well-known English statesman became a problem to me once I had seen him in his home, seated between a marble bust of himself and his own portrait in oils—both of which were life-size. Other leaders furnish their surroundings much after the manner of tenors and divas, with autographed photos in all kinds of handwriting. Others again collect little tokens of some success they have achieved: a letter, a pen, the picture of a house in which they assisted at the conclusion of some peace treaty. Generally, the silver frames are worth more than the kings whose pictures are displayed on the writing desk.

In Masaryk's large and lightsome bedroom,

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which is situated in the hexagonal tower of the Château, there is only a simply carved writing-desk and an iron bedstead which he also uses as a sofa. There are some open bookcases, on one of which stands Myron's Athena. In his work-room downstairs there are about a dozen medium-sized and small photographs standing on the shelves of his bookcases. There is not a single sign to remind one of the work he has done in his lifetime, the years of the war and the founding of the State—no souvenirs of any kind. Instead of these, there is a sketch of Tolstoi's head drawn by his son, the face looking old, flabby and careworn, like an ancient Rembrandt. There is a picture of Macdonald's dead wife about whom the husband had written a book and whose photograph Masaryk had requested. There is the picture of a Serbian priest who had helped him politically, and one of Briand, who was the first to acknowledge the founding of the new State. Then there is an Indian horseman in an attitude of prayer, who looks like a Herald of the Truth. There are pictures of Brentano, his teacher, in the prime of youth and as an old man—from whom he received much wise advice. There is a photo of the Czech priest who helped him in

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his boyhood days, and the photo of the sister of the pupil he looked after when he was sixteen years old, but the photo was taken when she was an old woman. There is a little picture of the smithy in which he worked as a youth. But there is no token to recall the great successes he has had, and no symbolic prototypes; not Washington, not even Plato or Goethe. Only souvenirs of thanks.

The question now was: whether part of this harmony was developed in his later years and whether at least the preparations for it were laid down in youth. His pictures as a boy would seem to give an affirmative answer, but many pronouncements that he has made speak against it. The enthusiastic and spontaneous way in which he always returns to his young days, of which all these little pictures in his room serve as reminders, show that from the beginning he had that ideal of equilibrium which he always strives to attain. I came to the kernel of this question only in a roundabout way.

“You like to speak of the Greek Ideal,” I began, “and always of the physically sound body. Do you believe that a manual labourer, as you have been, gains something thereby for the development of

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his brain which gives him an advantage over those who have developed the brain alone?"

"In the beginning I often regretted that I had left the smithy," Masaryk replied. "In the first place, manual labour keeps one concentrated on concrete things and makes one practical and efficient. Wonderful things can be done with a knife and a piece of wood. At school, my fellow-students were often unable to sharpen their pencils. Blacksmiths, locksmiths and carpenters—these are beautiful and noble crafts. Through handicraft one learns method. In science method is very important for the research worker, the results being more interesting to the public. Once one becomes accustomed to the method according to which a blacksmith works, then it is natural to apply that same finesse in every other kind of handiwork. It is not easy to believe how much a blacksmith must use his brain. I have an iron in the fire. It is at the right heat. Now I have to make nails from it. The knack of it is not to heat it twice; thereby one wastes coal and spoils the iron, therefore I must forge it quickly. I must buy the right iron, and I must buy it at the right price. I have to make horse-shoes. I have to sharpen ploughshares, and this

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means a lot of precision work. In the second place, all the muscles of the body are brought into concerted action, not merely the hands and the arms. The third consideration of importance is that I see the complete result of my handiwork immediately, while in the case of literary labour it may take a thousand years to produce an effect, or may produce no effect at all. A nail or a horseshoe is of immediate value and can at once be utilised. In my blacksmith days I learned the art of practical efficiency. Then, *per analogiam*, that was carried over into my political work, where I always have something to forge and to shape. Twenty years after I had left the blacksmith trade, Tolstoi recognised by my hands that I had been a manual labourer. I myself noticed that for many years afterwards the rough welts on them remained.

“In Vienna, my first job was that of a locksmith, but I ran back home because the work was so monotonous—doing the same mechanical action every day. Perhaps it was a deciding circumstance in my life that a school companion stole the hand atlas which I had kept since my grammar-school days, and sold it. With this atlas I used to make mental journeys throughout the world. Without it

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I felt myself quite alone. My parents lived next door to the smithy of the estate, and there I became a smith. Once I met my music teacher from the High School when I was bringing water to the smithy. I learned from him that he had seen my mother and had said to her that as I had been through the High School, I ought rather to become a teacher. Therefore I became assistant teacher to the father of my music master in the village where I had spent most of my boyhood. There was only one room for all the children. Boys and girls, big and small, all had to gather there. Nobody had trained me how to teach; I had only my school knowledge to go by, my experiences in the smithy and my experiences in everyday life.

“For some time I taught the children there. I had to learn the organ to play at Mass. As a boy I had learned to play the violin, and later on at school I maltreated the piano. My organ playing was very bad. Then came a critical time for me. At funerals I had to take part in the ceremony. I did not understand the Latin responses, which irritated me. The curate—the one on this picture, whom I liked so much—said to me: ‘You speak Latin very badly.’ Then the idea came to me to learn Latin with the

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curate. We had no grammar—only an old dictionary. I began to study this dictionary then from A to Z. By that time my Latin teacher thought I ought to go to a college. I slaved and slaved and took my exam. at a near-by Piaristen college. The examining professor tested me according to the dictionary and in that I was a master. With my primary certificate I went to the college at Brünn.”

I can only reproduce his words, but not the cadences of his voice or his facial expression, nor the chuckling good-natured laugh with which he related the joke he had played on the examiner, an episode which took place sixty years previously, nor the gesture of helplessness which asked how he could possibly have learned the grammar. All was said in a firm tone of voice; not once did he become wistfully reminiscent, nor did he show the least sign of pride when speaking of what he had successfully achieved. I should rather say that he felt surprised and thankful about it, and felt confident that his career had followed the road destined for him. When was it that he attained this resolute firmness of character? The physical power to endure in the struggle and his cheerfulness of soul through it all?

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"You have thought a good deal about inner equilibrium," I said, "and how to arrive at that attitude of mind which Goethe finally succeeded in reaching. You have declared that you do not drink, because if you did you would drink too much. I conclude that in your youth you had to fight many battles with yourself. When you were eighteen or nineteen years old you attacked a professor with a poker." He was quite on the *qui vive* in following these rather risky statements of mine. Then his features relaxed and his face assumed an impish look. He laughed and his teeth gleamed through the short white beard as he replied:

"It was the fire tongs. In school I got into several difficulties on account of my religion. I told our religious instructor and the professor about my religious doubts. The professor was an unsympathetic and unattractive person." Suddenly he became serious—almost morose. "Once I had to come to his office and he reprimanded me for my conduct in not going to confession, as had been laid down in the rules. Moreover, he complained that I had been carrying on a rather sordid love affair. That put me on my mettle: 'What you say is all untrue. My conduct



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has been quite straight. You impute dirt to me. You must not do that!' Then he became furious. I was also excited, and he called the school porter to his aid. From the coal scuttle which stood by the stove I seized the fire tongs and took an attitude of defence against them both. I did not want them to expel me, and so I left on my own behalf. Hence *consilium abeundi*. But just then the local chief of police whose son I tutored was transferred. He took me with him to Vienna, and there I completed my grammar-school course."

"Were you never enraged at that time by the arrogant airs of the upper classes and your father's position? You once spoke of an episode in regard to the fur coats which the local gentry hung up in your home on returning from the hunt, and how the loudness of their manner both infuriated and disgusted you."

"In those imperial hunts," he related, "the day's chase in the woods was celebrated in the evenings with eating and drinking beside a piled-up fire. Then the servants threw the remains of the meal into buckets. And once I saw how the beaters and other followers greedily rushed to these buckets. I thought they were eating long

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worms; but it must have been macaroni. My father was employed on one of the imperial estates in Southern Moravia, and he was born a serf. Outwardly he maintained a friendly attitude towards his masters, but inwardly he was antagonistic to them. I often heard him grumble against them when I was a child at home, but even before that I could feel how grudgingly these bondmen worked. It was not laziness; it was rather unwillingness to do forced labour. When my father afterwards left service I was able to help him somewhat and to buy a house for him in the country. And do you know what he did? Although he had commenced his career as a gardener's assistant, when it came to tilling his own garden he refused to move a hand. He sat down, ordered a labourer to manure it. Such are the results of service that is done without any liking for it and with only a purely mechanical responsibility."

"And so while still in your parents' home this experience encouraged you to shape your own life otherwise and better?"

"I scarcely thought about it; but my mother was very desirous that I should have a better position in life than that of my parents. And yet

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their peculiar nomadic life had its advantages for me. On those estates it was the custom to change the servants after some years; because it was feared that they might make friends with the people against their masters. And so there was a good deal of wandering, even as a child, from town to village, from village to village, and so on. That may have caused a certain amount of restlessness in me, for I had travelled around what was a little world in itself. Then I wanted to get out into the great world as a diplomat; but that was closed against me. Afterwards I fulfilled my wish in another way; for as a matter of fact I have travelled around the world. Austria, Hungary, Germany in those early days, married in America, visited Middle Europe, Russia and the Balkans, then the great trip around the world during the war."

"And in your youth what did you do for this constitutional unrest of yours?"

"It often made me mad. There was a scene. The holidays. I was in my village with the parish priest. Sunday. Church service. There was a decorated tree and people danced around it, a national custom. How habitual it was for a row to break out at the dance. I looked on. Two young fellows got fighting.

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One was suddenly covered with blood and lay on the dancing ground. I ran to the inn at the other end of the village, where the doctor was playing cards with the notabilities. 'Come quickly.' He did not look at me; he played on. I was angry. I seized him by the collar. He made a gesture with his hand—foolish young fellow. Then I shook him and finally he came. On the dancing ground we found the wounded washed clean and dancing again. Then and there the doctor jeered at me and I learnt a lesson—not to become excited unnecessarily."

"And did you not dance with them?"

"Naturally, when I was bigger, but not much. In later years I always practised gymnastics in the Sokol, the Greek Ideal, for the development of bodily health and in greatest possible harmony."

"Do you believe that this rests the mind?"

"Mental work tires one often and consumes bodily nourishment just as muscular labour does. But the careful brain-worker must always think of the body also. At least a short walk in the fresh air every day is indispensable. I always do that. For longer walks I must have some ulterior motive, such as fishing. In order to have physical exercise I pretended to myself that I was going to hunt wild

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animals; it was my pretext for bodily activity. So I went out with a gun to encounter a bear or a lynx. I never shot a hare or a reindeer. With bears it is dangerous: here I stand and there you stand." He began to sketch the position from memory with his hands. "A fairly wide valley, a flowing stream, mountains all around, wonderful moonlight. Yonder the shepherds' fire. I liked that. I was out in the open four or five hours. About midnight the bear came down into the field and there ate the ears of corn. That aroused me. I only shot one or two.

"Hold—I remember how I ran. I ran on foot to Vienna during the holidays when I was a student in the Gymnasium—literally ran—in order to see the capital. This was connected with a personal problem which I had in my mind ever since my childhood. A fellow-villager had brought the news from Vienna that there was a bridge there made of indiarubber. I knew well that this was not correct, but I wished to see how it happened that the boy got such an idea into his mind. The bridge over the Danube Canal is as elastic as any other bridge under heavy traffic. On another occasion I visited the Slovack villages in Lower Austria in order to

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observe how they were being Germanised. That meant still further expeditions."

"In such a restless youth," I said, after a while, "perhaps you had older friends who were able to direct you?"

He became thoughtful and appeared to recall to mind the careers of some others before he said:

"Very little, scarcely at all. I learned from many, but as to having been directed—no. A friend is one whom I address with the informal 'Du.' One, two, are dead. Only the Sokol, the companions with whom I practised athletics, did I address as 'Du.' I am reserved, in spite of all I am telling you. I have never said a word to anybody about certain experiences and certain feelings that I had. Such a nature is more likely to form acquaintances than friendships."

"Then it may be that your marriage altered your whole inner attitude."

"The family," he said, "was a citadel. My wife was a stranger in Prague and at first did not speak the Czech language. She was a very highly gifted woman and I owe very much to her. I believe she had a better brain than mine, and then from her childhood on her nature was in perfect equilibrium,

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whereas I had to struggle fairly hard to attain that state. I had the proper direction but the way to the goal was not very straight—it was as if I had to go around the table in order to get to the corner over there. She was remarkably gifted; mathematics, chess, music, literature. And, moreover, religious, a Unitarian. Her influence over the children was very great. She was the best that a wife can be to her husband and family.”

He had brought lots of things together and I had good grounds for trying to win him away from this theme. For that reason I recalled to him a crisis in which, when he had become tired from having raised so many enemies and having fought so many conflicts, he was seized with the idea of emigrating to America.

“How did it come, then,” I asked, “that your wife, who was an American, held you back from that?”

“She saw,” he replied, “that I would be a stranger in America. I might have remained there as professor or journalist. Here I could become angry, but in America I never would become angry, because nothing there would be close to my heart. She had seen that.”

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In this definite and curious turn I again recognised the born fighter, which lay within the character of the thinker, and yet through no excitement whatsoever would it ever disturb the inner equilibrium for an abiding period. I returned to what he had repeatedly described as harmony and brought to his mind the fact that he was known as a Realist, and asked him how that had come about.

"The people did not know what I was, politically or philosophically. A journalist came to interrogate me and called me a Positivist. 'I am not that,' I said to him, thinking of Comte's philosophy. 'Then what?' If you wish to call me something, call me a realist, *Res contra Historiam*."

Suddenly he began in his usual way to generalise the theme. When he is in that frame of mind he turns the eyes upwards for a moment. They are not deeply set eyes, but in the pale face they are like agate eyes set into a marble bust. He then spoke with a soliloquising air.

"To describe my *Weltanschauung* in a comprehensive term, I should say: Realist. In history I never lose sight of the facts that carry on its development. When people speak of progress they often think in too abstract a way and not



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on what is actually progressing. Everywhere in Nature and in human society I see individuals. But these individuals, these individualisms, are apprehended by us through a process of abstraction, through the fundamental sciences of mechanics, physics, chemistry, psychology, sociology, etc. But the real task is to use these abstractions as helps and out of them to come to the concrete. We have, for example, biology, a science dealing with life itself; life itself, what is that? I live, you live, animals live, plants live. I remove the biological abstractions and then it becomes the fundamental science for concrete anthropology, zoology, etc.—concretism. That is what I try to do.

“Science and art? Goethe was a great poet but had a scientific education. The researcher must have imagination, but he works with concepts, whereas Goethe worked with pictorial images. Grillparzer says that the poet must have an exact training but that he must forget it when he begins to write poetry.

“Modern knowledge is illimitable, it cannot be mastered by one man. Aristotle and even Plato were much more simple than we are, because they knew less. A little mathematics, Euclid and

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the first principles of other sciences. 'No unmathematical person may enter here' was Plato's election cry. Hence they thought more simply and more definitely. They devoted themselves to a few things. For the past two thousand years Aristotle has been the teacher of mankind; but I prefer Plato to Aristotle, because he is a poet and more religious than Aristotle. Plato and Aristotle are two human types, two basic characters in the world of human thought."

Suddenly he broke off. He looked at me mischievously and said, with a laugh, through which his inner pathos is always allowed to shine:

"One must have trust in one's star. I believe in my star."

And I saw that, despite all his inner struggles, I had before me a favourite of the gods.



PART II

ACTION



## CHAPTER 7

### AN OLD MAN TURNS REVOLUTIONARY

**I**N his young days Masaryk wrote: "The revolutionary is a Rousseauian savage who is terrified by the increasing complexity of the world. Therefore he opposes development and progress and true culture—Revolution is gross political primitivism." At bottom all his statements and indeed his whole life had been anti-revolutionary. So also his work in the Imperial Parliament at Vienna. Yet, at the same time, both as teacher and protagonist, the effect of his work had been always that of an agitator and he transformed the mental outlook of a whole generation of young people. I knew that shortly before the war he had written a book on Russia wherein he formulated some conditions under which revolution would be permissible and morally justified as "Defence against Oppression." But has there ever been a revolt that did not display just that motive on its banner?

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“It must be proved to be in the true interests of the people.” Anybody might contradict that from his own standpoint. And ultimately what is it that determines the moral right of a revolution except success? And when it comes off successfully it is forgiven, said Wallenstein.

With these thoughts in my mind I began our conversation as follows: “You have sketched the revolutionary as part gambler and part play-actor, superstitious, absolutist and a tyrant. Yet that certainly does not apply to yourself, who may be considered as the founder of the Czech Revolution and certainly the leader who carried it through. And shortly before the war we saw you take the part of a mediator.

“As late as 1912 you preferred the maintenance of peace among the various peoples of the Austrian Empire rather than support an uncertain struggle for the liberation of the Czechs. And even in May 1913 you stated in the Imperial Parliament at Vienna that as a pacifist you would not allow yourself to be entrammelled in visions of the dismemberment of Austria. Would you like to tell me when the decisive change in your ideas and career took place?”

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He nodded and began:

“I have written against revolution and I have even called the revolutionary a philistine. When translated into the Czech language that is a very strong term. I have been constantly occupying myself with the problem, from the ethical and practical standpoints. There are unnecessary and foolhardy revolutions; less foolhardy, well organised, prepared and unprepared, chance successes and chance failures. I spoke against revolution because with us the radicals were children politically. I am not a radical—it is difficult to say, but certainly I am not a radical. As a rule, in politics men take up a position either to the left or right. Then the wiseacre comes along and combs his beard with his hand and says: ‘Children, neither to the right nor to the left: the golden middle way.’ This man with the beard has no outlook of his own. The right and the left have their definite opinions; the tactical gold-seeker slips in or creeps in between them. He needs the radical oppositions so that he can skip to and fro. A man of conviction, provided he have the gift of political insight, acts in conformity with the programme that he has constructed independently from the



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historical situation which he finds before him. We had the Gaborites and the Brothers, both radicals, of the left and the right, but the Hussite Archbishop of Prague said: 'We must take the golden middle way!'"

"Then is the ideal revolutionary a man with a careful reasoning mind or one who is guided more by passion?"

"A careful thinker, a calculator, a mathematician. Democracy means self-rule. Autonomy begins with the self. How can I govern others if I do not govern myself? Revolution is the supreme right of self-determination, whereby I take the initiative into my own hands. One must speak to the public at meetings and in parliament, through the newspapers and books; for it is necessary to have explored all peaceful and constitutional ways of bringing about the necessary reform. At last the moment comes when I say to myself: 'It is no use, I must bring about the necessary reform by revolutionary means.' To a certain extent I may be to blame, in that I did not have sufficient patience. Revolution is not a *Putsch*. The English make a distinction between rebellion and revolution, and the anarchical deed of the individual is quite

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another thing too. The attempt on the life of a ruler is frequently murder, not mere manslaughter. We ourselves had a case of it in the 'nineties. At that time I came out in public against the culprits. After they had been sentenced I sent books to the prison for these young fellows, so that they might learn. I studied the problem of revolution in the Russian literature. I leave it to the psychologists to say why I have busied myself so much with the problem of revolution. Revolution as a political adventure? No. Serious revolution? Yes, when necessary."

"When do you think that revolution is a moral act?" I asked him directly.

"When it is the only means left for the defence of liberty and justice. Before it be adopted all efforts to achieve that end in a peaceful way must have been made. Schiller says that very finely in *William Tell*. Following this line of thought and making all efforts accordingly, I must decide what is necessary to be accomplished. For example, must the King come to terms or must he abdicate, and his whole band with him? They will not agree and they shoot. Then we shoot also. Revolution is not morally justified by success alone but, as in the

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case of every other deed, it will be judged according to the motives; and not merely as a whole, for each single act is subject to the same moral verdict. In a revolution single acts may be entirely reprehensible. They must be branded as crimes, as the murderous act of the anarchist. Every revolution unchains anarchical elements."

"Do you include the Hussite revolution also in what you have said?" I asked.

"Each revolution is *sui generis*," he answered. "Austria had broken up internally. In October 1918 the German and Hungarian regiments were first withdrawn from the Italian front, and after them the Czech regiments. Our Czech Reformation had an intellectual and moral and religious foundation. We are all Hussites, said Luther. Engels said that Luther and Cromwell had prepared the way for the French Revolution. First came the great ecclesiastical revolution, for at that period the Church was the principal power ruling over human society. Once ecclesiastical authority had been overthrown the struggle against political authority followed of necessity. I myself have always championed natural right, side by side with historical right, which is cherished so much

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amongst us—always with the thought: The time may come when you will have to follow natural right, and that means revolution, and without regard for historical antecedents, if that should be necessary.”

“And yet you write that at the beginning you feared to make the decision, whether you should demonstrate your renouncement of Austria by a physical act. ‘I wished that this chalice would pass from me,’ you state clearly. Why? Because it was not you who sent the ultimatum to Serbia in 1914, but your enemy had played into your hands.”

“Jesus prayed to God for the same,” he answered firmly. “It was a bitter chalice that I had to drink. If I must, so must it be. I knew that I should have to leave my family. All right. That’s part of the business. Sacrifices. All right. I must go. Having spoken against Austria all my life I was ashamed to remain quietly at home when I saw that Austria must now fall because of her own guilty act. I read that Czech soldiers were being shot for high treason and I thought: ‘That is a worthier man than you. He stands up for the one thing you have always demanded.’ For years long I have spoken against the government and the dynasty, for years long I

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have demanded our rights. All at once came the opportunity to fight for these rights. Through the amicable way, in parliament, it had not succeeded. Then I turned revolutionary."

As he spoke, this man of eighty-three years looked as if he were only fifty. He uttered the above sentences in a firmer tone of voice than any he had used before or afterwards. In this point, which the moralist in him may have sifted and tested through all those years, he was sure of his own absolution. Here he stood before God and History absolutely unarmed. From here, where the psychological climax of the problem lay, I passed on to the single events connected with the beginning of the war and asked first about Count Berchtold, so that I might have an eye-witness's confirmation of my own account of Berchtold which has been published to the world and thereby given rise to some controversy.

"Fine shoes, ironed creases," said Masaryk, "immaculate ties and wonderfully confident about everything. To the fine Count there comes a deputy who brings proposals from Pasic as to how a lasting peace could be made between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. What the Serbian demanded

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was not much. Berchtold should have invited him to Vienna. The beau-ideal of the superficial and frivolous Vienna aristocrat. It is told that he said of me, after I had visited him: 'There was a professor here who wanted to earn a commission.'"

"Before your departure in the autumn of 1914, you visited Koerber. Because he was the only one in the Vienna War Ministry whom I judged to be a man of worth, may I ask about these final conversations that you had with Austrian officialdom?"

"I did not tell Koerber what plans I had," said Masaryk, "so that he should not be forced to imprison me. 'I am a politician,' I said to him. 'I have been making observations in Prague. We fear riots. Tell me honestly what you expect from the war. You must know whether the army chiefs and the armies are efficient, what the spirit of the army will be, how the Archdukes will behave. You are at the source and must know. Also what we, Czechs, have to hope for if the Central Powers should prove victorious.'

"'We are not well prepared,' Koerber answered, 'and if we should win together with Germany Austria will not turn back on its path, it will not grant freedom to its peoples; on the contrary, it

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will become domineering and create new difficulties.' This judgement was very important for me. At the same time, through this and a similar visit to the Stadthalter, Thun, I got the impression that I had to be careful of the radical hot-heads in Prague."

"Were you at that time able to know what were the causes of the war?"

"I believe today, as I believed then, that all are guilty. There are so many historians in Germany and therewith a kind of thinking that is unhistorical.

"Germany's tragic fault lies in the fact that for two hundred years she preached militarism through the professors as a scientific accomplishment and in the fact the officer was the beau-ideal of society. For that reason Germany has to bear a proportionately greater blame. Similarly, Russian Czarism and the Russian Church are chiefly to blame. The English have a kind of naval militarism. The internal political situation in Austria was untenable: the German and Hungarian minorities could not permanently shackle and oppress the majority. Before the war I often formulated the case thus: Austria-Hungary ought to be a peaceful Europe on a small scale, it ought to be a prototype for the

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conciliation of the peoples; but it could not abandon the traditions of the old regime. Austria-Hungary has been punished for its crime and Germany also has had to examine its conscience. Politically speaking, the national and political past has to be revised. Unimaginable, how the innumerable historians and political leaders have treated the war-guilt problem in a purely mechanical way, without examining the individual conscience. The priests and parsons preach God, His omniscience and righteousness. Did God sleep throughout the world war? Germany was militarily prepared but politically short-sighted. Its great political error was that it did not recognise the weakness of Austria-Hungary. And the Germans also did not have a correct estimation of England and America, nor even of Italy."

These invulnerable statements impressed me, because I have been attacked for holding the same opinion. I was silent about this and said: "So it appears *post bellum*. But then in the August of 1914, in perfect ignorance of the origin, did you not have the sense of a great adventure as you departed?"

"Of course. Revolution too is always an adventure. But the important thing is the whole motiva-



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tion of the action. I placed my life and my family in jeopardy. My son died in the war, of typhus which he caught from Galician refugees. As an American my wife was protected somewhat. As a matter of fact, the women of America hindered her imprisonment. I did not think that they would imprison my daughter instead of her. I never disclosed to my wife a word about my plans, because she could not lie if she were cross-examined; nor did I tell my children. My son, an Austrian officer, knew nothing of it. Naturally, they could soon guess what my plans were. I only said: 'I am now going to Italy,' after I had been in Holland twice already. I wanted to come back again from Italy, and also from Switzerland, but it was too late. I shall now answer you. I considered the step I was taking very carefully and conscientiously. It was daring, probably I was foolhardy, but then I did not act in an adventurous way. In an essay on the prognosis of the war—naturally carefully written—I counted in, as it were, the victory of the Entente Powers."

"And how much did your friends know? How did you arrange to have a sort of mandate given you for abroad?"

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"I did not explain my plans fully to anyone, only indicated them. I said: 'I go away and I shall fight for our cause.' I did not call them together. I spoke with them individually more or less according to their political leanings and abilities. When I went abroad I had the confidence of the political leaders of all parties."

"Why was it that they were not suspicious of you abroad? Why did they believe you?"

He laughed. "I was known, and Austrian stupidity did the rest for me. That they openly pursued me was quite sufficient for my prestige abroad. When they imprisoned my daughter, that was worth millions. Assemblies in New York and other states sanctioned me. Remember that my daughter was well known in America as a social worker. I was also known there."

"But after a life of such bourgeois morality, so completely removed from the subterranean career of the professional revolutionary, and in the middle sixties, how did you find yourself for the first time in all those illegal intrigues?"

He now assumed a contented expression, that of the peasant who will maintain his point to the end. Then he said, with sparkling eyes:

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“From Rome and Geneva I had to keep in touch with Prague. And so the contact had to be established. There was a technician who had discovered something of which the police knew nothing as yet. For example, did you ever think how the piece of lead can be taken out of a lead pencil? Do you see? Out of this one here—and replaced by a miniature letter written in cipher?” He opened the double lid of his watch and pointed to the little wheel. “No policeman thinks of investigating to find whether a little piece of paper may not be stuck under these wheels.” He now bent forward and came near me as if he had to speak confidentially in an undertone, all mock-play: “We had a barrel of oil sent to Prague. Hung on a thin wire from the plug, a letter floated on the oil. Our technician knew his job. He had also patented a naval engine. For me the inventing of such a correspondence was a rest for the restless brain. And sometimes also a bit of fun.”

“Besides these intrigues numerous conflicts must have arisen within yourself; for your mind was against war as such, and completely against a long war.”

“There was the struggle,” he said, nodding

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affirmatively. "As a man, I naturally wanted to shorten the duration of the war as much as possible. As a politician, I knew that if Austria and Germany were quickly defeated we could not achieve what we actually have achieved. We needed a long war. Our cause was little known; for our propaganda we needed a long war. In the training of the legions my preoccupation was to avoid as far as possible the sacrifice of lives. Blood is a precious liquid. At home there were two political Utopias, the Russian and the French. Of Czarist Russia I knew that it offered nothing worth while on which we could build. The French were friendly towards us, but they had to be won over to my ideas. They also, in conjunction with the other Great Powers, wanted to have Austria maintained, beside and against Germany, as we had wanted it with our Palacky. The most that was hoped for there abroad was a revolution in Austria, which would shorten the duration of the war. I knew that no such event would happen, and I stuck to my work against Austria. Just think of this grotesque situation: A foreign politician arrives in a belligerent country, a professor, a civilian, he is for war—he is well received and he is believed."

## CHAPTER 8

### HOW AN OLD MAN BECOMES A MILITARY GENERAL

THE picture which forms the frontispiece of this book shows a man who has a definite purpose in his mind, and knows how to rule. The portrait was made when he was sixty-seven years old, but it does not show his age, in spite of the great difficulties he had to go through during the years that immediately preceded. One notices a certain hard look, an expression that is not usual with him, and one is not surprised to learn that this photograph was taken amidst shootings from all sides, when he was in a house in Kiew. And yet none will ask why he wears no uniform. It is obvious that a man whose countenance displays such concentrated force does not need a uniform in order to assert his authority. When he was in Russia he had no other power over his soldiers except the moral force of his personality. I was

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anxious to know how it was that he could so well grapple people to himself.

"The idea," I began, "of forming your own army from the Czech soldiers who were prisoners of war in Russia and elsewhere, and use this army to fight against Austria, came into your mind during the first weeks of the war. Why? Did not the Poles regain their national independence without a war of liberation?"

"The Polish question," answered Masaryk, "had been always a subject of discussion. It was a living tradition. I have met Poles whose grandfathers lived in the old Kingdom of Poland."

While he was talking, I looked steadily at the man before me and realised that he might easily have spoken with people who had known Goethe. He went on: "Much less was known about the Czech nation. As we had to attract the attention of the world towards us, we had to show the Allies something more than our history and our claim for the recognition of our rights. What happened to the thousands of Czech deserters who went over to the Russians when they heard their own folk-songs sung in the trenches? I wished to collect these first. I felt that we ought to fight and that we

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ought not to be content with merely shouting that we had just claims against Austria-Hungary. My professorial ideas could not help me much. When everyone was playing with guns, I also had to take up some weapon."

"And did the deserters understand that? Thousands of young people who, through good luck, had just escaped death! What did they think of the aims of that undertaking which at first was so idealistic?"

He assumed a mischievous expression and said: "The other evening, when you were raving about the hospitality of the Russians, I thought how monotonous it would be to live with those people in the country. Some of our prisoners of war there felt that boredom also. They were glad when something turned up for them to do. The Legion offered them shelter and bread. Most of them were enthusiastic, politically wide-awake and determined. The idea of fighting Austria-Hungary arose spontaneously among the Czechs in all Allied countries. I discussed the matter with an American in Prague at the beginning of the war, while America was still neutral. He afterwards went to our compatriots in all Allied countries and ex-

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plained the proposal to them. In France, where there were no Czech prisoners of war, the Czech immigrants, who were principally workmen, declared themselves willing to join the French army against Austria. When they tried to do the same in Russia, the Czar's government declared that this was high treason against the Emperor Franz Joseph, and refused to accept volunteer recruits from the Czech prisoners of war; because, as traitors, they could not be trusted. Then what was right to be done? Emperors support one another even when they are waging war against one another. Only with the downfall of the Czar and when Miljukow, whom I had already known, came into power, did our prisoners of war in Russia get permission to organise as a fighting corps. But as far back as 1914 the Czechs and Slovacks domiciled there formed a special section of the Russian army."

"You were a civilian. Why didn't the military people do anything about it? There must have been officers of high rank among the war prisoners?"

"No. Austria had little confidence in us and therefore very few Czechs were allowed to rise to important positions in the army or the diplomatic



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service. In Hungary Slovacks were absolutely excluded from holding positions under the State. The organisation of an army is just that kind of work which a civilian can do better than a soldier. In 1871, Clemenceau, who was a civilian and a doctor, did much the same thing. After I got permission in Russia I had to seek provisions, clothing and weapons. Then came the question: On what front? My plan was to come to France and fight there for our freedom. Then there were many non-military things to be arranged: to organise the soldiers' mail, to provide tailors and bootmakers, to have newspapers printed and distributed, to furnish the many railroad cars in which they had to live for several weeks, and try to make them as homelike as possible. What other armies possessed as a matter of course had to be created here under new circumstances. It was often very difficult to get bread; we were concentrated in the Ukraine. Our people received paper roubles and wished to use them in payment. The peasant said: I don't give anything for these. Why? For my wheat give me nails, a file, a saw; for I want such things. What can I do with paper? I prefer to wait until the Germans come. They have what I need."

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"That is the practical part," I said. "But how could the soldier understand this vague and novel idea?"

"Each Czech knew the past history of his country. The work of historical enlightenment which had been going on for two hundred years had prepared the way for this. I have often spoken to my soldiers about our history so that they might know why they were to fight. We named the regiments after Zizka and other Czech protagonists. This I could say: 'You see we had a Zizka, a great soldier and thorough-going hero.' But I told them also that he did not attack, but was content to defend his country's interests. He did not resort to armed resistance until after a Council had preached a crusade against the Hussites. Huss was forcibly suppressed because the Emperor Sigismund, the King of Bohemia, had broken his promise of granting him a safe-conduct. Chelcicky had seen the conflict between the two religions and preached the gospel of non-resistance. And so from the spirit of the people a pacifist Church arose. King Podjebard, who had been elected by the people, proposed a confederacy of European rulers. After the battle of the White Mountain the anti-reformist Austria held our people in subjugation and refused to

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acknowledge our national rights even up to our own day. My idea was to show, in spite of Chelcicky's example, that we had to fight and defend ourselves. The boys were sufficiently educated to understand correctly."

"Did all this take place in the camp?"

"In camp, but mostly in the open air or in one of the city halls. I also had to address myself to the Russians, so that they would understand us. A résumé of what I had said used to be published in the newspapers."

"Seeing that you were a civilian, did nobody object to your position as a military commander? I think they called you Dictator."

"The legionaries proclaimed me dictator, because in the rush of war-time it enables quick decisions to be made. The Romans always did the same. And I had the full confidence of my soldiers. The soldiers saw that I had no fear. That was a weighty argument with them. When the Bolsheviks came to Petersburg I generally had to make a long detour through the by-streets in order to reach the official headquarters of our National Council. I could reach our offices only by coming through the Newski and the side streets, which was a long walk.

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Crossing the Newski there is a long and narrow street which leads down to the sea. In this quarter there was much shooting going on. I had to go along this street every day. I went. My soldiers saw that. An officer said to me: 'You have no sense of fear.' That was not true. Naturally I was often afraid. But I wanted to show the soldiers that I had no fear, or better, that in spite of fear—or at least prudence—I was doing my duty. Then they said that the leader ought not to expose himself to such danger. They gave me a soldier to be my servant and bodyguard. He was formerly servant to Count Czernin, the Austrian. I protested; for it was the first time in my life that I was to have a personal servant. What use would it be to me if the two of us were shot on the way? The soldier-servant came and, for instance, wanted to take off my boots. For a long time I refused this, but gradually I became accustomed to being waited upon. I often even played jokes on him. On our way to headquarters the soldier always looked around to see if there was any shooting going on. Once I suddenly ducked behind a doorway. He was in despair. He could not find me anywhere and went off to headquarters alone. So I showed the officers that it was

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unnecessary to protect me in this way. Finally it was said that I was invulnerable. Superstition. But it strengthened my authority. They used to laugh at my hat. But I kept it.'

"Did you ever do your military training?" I asked. "How did you learn military matters so quickly as to be able to become a *Generalissimo*?"

"The Director of Police whose son I was teaching in my young days got me exempted from doing my military training. Such things often happened in the old Austria. As member of parliament, I watched the army in Vienna and studied the budget. I had friends among the Austrian officers, who related their experiences to me. Later, in the early days of the war, when I was in London, I watched how they organised the new army and trained it. For example, I went to a hotel where the Canadians used to foregather. There I sat and listened, first to the sound of the French-Canadian voices, and then to what they said."

"But strategy?" I asked.

"I have been an organiser rather than a leader," he said, "although in guerilla wars one can also learn to become a leader. In such warfare one needs cleverness in order to be able to hold out with small

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forces against a regular army. The disorganisation of the military administration in Russia was to our advantage. Moreover, I had the constant task of directing the propaganda and the diplomatic proceedings."

"Had you no difficulties with the Soldiers' Councils which then came into existence, with the same food for all and the claiming of equal rights for all?"

"For some time. I had the officers eat apart from the men and I myself sometimes ate with the former and sometimes with the latter. I was always glad to be able to spend part of the day alone. Humanity does not force me to lose whole hours with people. Humanity in the army also; yes. But that also implies order. There must be a superior order and an order subject to it. I was in the war, and therefore I could not preach humanity emphatically as the first thing. I had men to reckon with and work with, just as they were, and I had to calculate what they could do. And of course humanity in caring for the soldiers and exposing their lives to danger as little as possible."

"Is it true," I asked further, "that anyone who wishes to command must have learned to obey? For a long time I have doubted the truth of

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this, and at an early age you yourself ceased to obey.”

“A commander must also submit to order, and there must be order and discipline among the soldiers. The soldier understands that readily. By nature I am not a ruler, but I know that the masses must be led. My method of leadership is not despotic but more by way of suggestion. The art of commanding properly is not easy: firm, laconic, suggestive; and, above all, what is demanded must be reasonable and useful.”

“I have never understood,” I said, “why the Bolsheviks allowed you free passage with your arms? Did not the October Revolution come as a surprise to you? Or were you really so strong that, as Dr. Kramar said, you could have beaten the young Bolsheviks and, as he put it, ‘saved Russia’?”

“I did not expect the kind of revolution that Lenin carried out,” said Masaryk, “but I expected that the failures of the Russian army would give rise to trouble. Anyhow, at that time we were better organised than the Bolsheviks, but we were not strong enough to subdue them throughout the whole of that immense country. If we fought them

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our action would have served to unite them and forced them to organise themselves better. The reproach which you have mentioned arose from an over-estimation of our strength and ignorance of the local conditions. Our army was centred around Kiew. Had we attacked the Bolsheviks we should soon have had the German army against us, and how could we have withdrawn to Moscow, Petersburg and the other cities? With 50,000 to 60,000 men you cannot lay siege to such places as Petersburg, Moscow, Kiew, Charkow, etc., and hold them. The Russians would have taken other measures with us. My officers said the same. And I did not wish to be mixed up with the Russian parties, because throughout all the Entente countries Lenin's revolution was looked upon as a transitory episode. I sent a memorandum to Wilson in which I indicated that the political domination of the Bolsheviks would probably last for a long time. The German army was also of great political importance in Russia, because it had developed very strong influence in the Ukraine. Practical measures were then being taken to put the Pan-German programme into effect. I was well informed on that point. The Bolsheviks had made



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several blunders; but, in the last analysis, they were also Russians. From the beginning they behaved very well towards us and assured me a free exit and armed neutrality.”

“Is it true that the success of your troops at Zborov had an important effect?”

“It had a great effect on the Russians of all parties, who hitherto had been sceptical. They saw how our legions covered the Russian rear and supported them tactically. But we could not remain in Russia. My plan was to come with the army to Vladivostock. The ships of the Allies would be there, to bring them to the battlefields in France. If the Armistice had not intervened they would have come to France and have fought there against the Germans. At the beginning of 1918 we had 50,000 rifles and our boys were good soldiers. Some of our people thought that the distance across Siberia would be too great for the transport of our army. Why not strike through Europe? But I knew that, in the circumstances, the longest way around the world was the shortest. And in what direction should we strike through? And towards what objective? I also knew that with our plan we could make an impression on the world. The

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Siberian Anabasis soon became an everyday expression.

“I had to come out against Clemenceau also at that time. He sent a French General from Roumania and demanded that with our troops, which I should allow to be declared as a section of the French army, I should go to Bessarabia, where the Roumanians were fighting against the Germans. I had unfavourable reports of the situation there. Therefore I wanted, first of all, to form my own judgement on the state of affairs in that quarter. So I went down there and spoke with the King and the generals and looked over the troops. I found that the soldiers were already on short rations; how could I allow a whole army to share their food? I found out also that some circles in Roumania were already thinking of peace.

“Then I got out of Russia as quickly as I could. I also had to take account of approaching events, for I felt that peace was coming. So I arranged for the control of our army and hastened across Japan to America. There I had to gain Wilson’s support and public opinion in favour of our new State.”

## CHAPTER 9

### HOW A STATE WAS FOUNDED

THE topic now at hand was one that might have aroused the emotional side of his nature. But Masaryk evaded the temptation. He described his work as an aggregate of details. So the future historian must be careful of his *a posteriori* conclusions when he mounts his legendary heroes on white horses and degrades painstaking human beings into demigods who launch the thunderbolt and are glorified in its rays. In this respect Masaryk resembles his antitype, Mussolini, who also disbelieves in personal inspiration.

"You recently declared," I began, "that you did not sleep much during those four years of the war. I do not understand how that could have been, because it is contrary to your Greek ideal and your lifelong habit of careful attention to matters of health."

He looked at me in a quite unusual scrutinising

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way, as if he were looking for some *arrière-pensée*. He remained silent for a while, and then said:

"I was not in my element. It was a question of mathematical calculation all those four years. It was cold-blooded pondering, the brain. It was arithmetical calculation. On paper I added up the striking forces and the condition of the belligerents on both sides. I did that immediately after the outbreak of the war, and when I was abroad I continued to do so, on the basis of the information that came from the different war fronts. I had to weigh matters every day. It was a continual task in arithmetic, measuring the moral and physical resources on both sides. That was my daily job for four years; it was a big worry. At first I forgot my daily round of physical exercises. In Geneva I decided to go to a riding school, because it was necessary to preserve my physical health. Then I took regular horseback exercise. The pressure of daily work, the waiting for decisive results from the battle-fields, that constant tension prevented me from sleeping properly. The Ideal, you say—yes, that is a matter of feeling, of the heart, as we say, but how to bring about the realisation of it was a

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problem that exhausted the intellect—the calmer this can remain, so much the better.”

“You knew the Vienna of the old Emperor,” I said. “But how did you know that the young Emperor would not turn out to be more logical and more modern and thus make his own terms of peace immediately, which would have spelled destruction for you?”

“I knew about the eventual succession to the throne. It happened that my friend did not live far from Franz Ferdinand’s castle. Konopitsch had studied him before the war. And our historian, Goll, had taught Emperor Karl when the latter was still a prince. From what they told me I was able to take the measure of those two successors to the throne.”

“And the enemy? I mean—the Allies?” I laughed at my own slip of the tongue. He took it good-humouredly.

“Besides the study of them which I had previously made, I learned also from my new experience of them. In October 1914 I began my political activities in Italy. Italy was then neutral; but there were many public monuments and inscriptions that expressed hatred against Austria. In Rome I

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visited a famous historian, who clapped his hands together: "Tis you! But you're dead! We read that you had been executed in Prague.' 'Long life,' said I, and explained the situation to him. I attended meetings in Rome, listened to arguments for and against the Allies. I met Serbs and Croats in Rome and afterwards in Geneva. I utilised the time in trying to win over my Serb and Croat friends for the union of those two races. When I left Italy I knew that it would not remain neutral.

"Then in Geneva and London, simply details to be attended to. How many articles I had to write and to repeat! Because the people knew so little about Austria-Hungary. For example, an English statesman believed that Galicia belonged to Hungary and then said in astonishment: 'This Austria must be of a very extraordinary formation,' as if he were speaking of Uganda. It is hard to believe how ignorant the political and military leaders in all the countries were in ethnographical, statistical and geographical matters. And naturally so. What do we know here about England, for example? My friends, Wickham Steed and Seton-Watson, were among those acquainted with outside affairs. Steed helped me through the medium

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of *The Times*, whose columns he opened to me."

"I have a high opinion of him," I said. "An Englishman who is fluent in languages is, according to Bismarck's dictum, dangerous. But this Englishman seems to me to combine the superior qualities of the Englishman with some of those of the continental European."

"What an enormous effort was put forth on both sides without effecting any change!" said Masaryk suddenly. "The Germans fought against half the world and did not lose heart. Strategically they held out for a long time, a great achievement. But they made political and tactical mistakes, calculated erroneously. Their great mistake was to have so badly assessed the value of Austria-Hungary. And on the other side: The French, who were so often looked upon in Germany as decadent, achieved wonders. And so did the English, the Americans, the Canadians, who had to begin by learning how to shoot. They were all brave. And, mind you, the democratic and non-military States won the war against the monarchist and militarist States, against those who had *learned* to be soldiers. Teleologically, an example of school training. The

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great theocratic and absolute monarchies of Europe have fallen.”

“And yet the war was not worth the price paid for it,” I contradicted. “Let me come back to your masterpiece, how you constructed a State where there was none and brought the Great Powers to accept it.”

“Through an army without its country,” he said cheerily. “Such a thing had never been before. Briand was the first to understand it. But don’t forget that we had our own State in the time of Maria Theresa and that we were always politically prepared for our independence.”

“Dr. Benes first won Briand over?”

“From Paris Benes worked everything, untiringly. I doubt very much if I could have managed the whole thing without Benes. It was a lucky circumstance that the two of us were there, he working more on details, but always guided by the Idea, and I myself working more in the constructive sphere of ideas. It was this collaboration between us both that led to success.”

“And did Briand allow himself to be readily won over?”

“He was a sort of Bohemian, as you know, but



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he had his fine Gallic wit. Up to then the Entente had intended to allow Austria to remain. I placed my arguments precisely before him, as he had never heard them before. I could see how quickly his intellect grasped them. Then when his friends tried to persuade him that Austria-Hungary ought to be maintained, so as to keep Germany weak and in check, he often wavered. But finally he understood that it was a false calculation to count on Austria-Hungary against Germany.

“In this connection I must also mention the Slovack, Stefanik. He was an astronomer, who lived in Paris. Because of his talent he quickly rose to the rank of General. He joined the French Air Force and carried on his profession in making climatic observations. He was an excellent and tireless propagandist. It was he who smoothed my path to Briand.”

“In this connection,” I said, “you have made a written statement that is full of significance. It ran: ‘I do not exaggerate when I say that the Entente has been furnished with a positive programme through our programme for the division of Austria-Hungary.’” I did not quote this with any accent of interrogation; but I looked at him

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intently, although his love of truth was a guarantee that the statement had its force.

"That's correct," he calmly said, and was silent. In order to ease the tension, I left this historical point and went over to something quite different.

"On listening to you," I said, "one might think that all this were possible without imagination."

"Imagination," he repeated pensively. "Since I was seven years old I have been a reader of poetry and novels. I need art in order to live spiritually. I have not been musically trained, although I have played the violin, as every Czech does. But I know poetry and I am convinced that the scientific investigator and creator must have imagination. I once published an essay on the relation of poetry to politics. My master, Plato, was a politician, but also a poet. Goethe said that a poet must have an exact imagination. The politician must have the same. And now in the war, with the whole of mankind divided into two camps: that was a colossal drama, a mighty picture. To take it in and comprehend it—that was a task for the imagination."

"And in the midst of this struggle," I said, "you went abroad to found a new State."

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"It was necessary to do a lot of work on small things," he repeated, "because the iron was not hot. For that reason a four years' war suited me better than a war of one year. As I have said, we needed time for propaganda. The French Revolution had also many phases and surprises, and finally the administrative side played a big role. In the beginning one tears down, but one must also think of building anew. The true revolution must always be a reformation. *Putsch* and rebellion do not suffice. The world war was a great revolution for which preceding political developments had prepared the way. History never moves in leaps and bounds. A change that has been historically prepared, as Marx foreshadowed in the case of the economic revolution." Then he paused and said: "A Destiny." For a moment he covered his eyes with both hands, as he pronounced that weighty word.

I abandoned this theme, so that I might come on to the question of Wilson, thus connecting up with my principal theme. I first asked him what were the reasons that brought America into the war.

"In the beginning the motive was the ideal of

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Liberty. Because the Germans bombarded open cities, sank ships, their ambiguous tactics at Washington—all these things made the Americans angry. That was the *Vis motrix*. Later on material motives came into play which may have caused the final eruption. But the Americans were not Mephistophilian, as was often said in Germany; they were just naïve.”

As I had written a dramatic and epic representation of Wilson, I was curious to have Masaryk's impression. I now asked him about Wilson.

“I personally came to know Wilson through my friends. I have already mentioned the memorandum on the Bolsheviks. Naturally I had previously learned something about his nature and character. Before he became President, by what may be called the chance of circumstances, his opponents wanted to publish a book against him, but they withdrew it after the election. I liked his wife very much, who visited us afterwards. The first time I saw him he was immaculately dressed, and I recognised the influence of his wife. I did not notice that streak of vanity in him of which so much has been said. As a historian he understood quickly, because here there was a big question at

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issue. Such a thinker must have realised fully what it meant for America to send troops to Europe. Their arrival made a tremendous impression on the world, and even on the Germans. The Americans maintained their military independence. They appeared as rich lords, built their own railway for their own troops in France, and let the champagne flow in Paris. From the military point of view the English approached the French more closely. But only the French were trained soldiers like the Germans. The Americans were of the volunteer type. So much the greater was the military achievement of this democracy."

"Is it true that you warned Wilson about coming over for the Peace?"

"I advised him that he ought to select some men for his staff of advisers from the ranks of his political opponents at home and bring them over with him. When I said that, he replied: 'I am stubborn because I came from a Scotch family.' And so he brought no Republican with him to Europe, a mistake. The good reception which he got in Paris must have made a great impression on him. But the greatness of his authority arose from the greatness of America—for it was a great thing for the

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Americans to have come to the help of the Europeans. On European questions, Wilson was insufficiently informed as to details.”

Although he spoke so fully about Wilson, Masaryk said nothing of his own master-stroke in getting the *Arbiter Mundi* to change his world programme on the points that regarded Austria-Hungary, and thus made possible the foundation of the succession States. I put the question bluntly to him:

“Were it not for you, would Austria-Hungary be still in existence today?”

“Probably yes,” he answered, without a pause. “This means that Austria-Hungary would have been maintained under guarantees which the Emperor Karl accepted. I influenced Wilson to the point where he no longer acknowledged these conditions. Wilson agreed with me and withdrew his plan, whereby the peoples of Austria-Hungary were to have only federal autonomy. I made it clear to Wilson that such a settlement would no longer suffice. We had been betrayed more than once by Austria-Hungary. I gave him the historical proofs of it. Then, as an honest man and a thinker, he publicly withdrew his former plan,

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without consulting any other person, I think. I was able to show him that France and England and Russia had already recognised our army for the future State. I had Greece also with us. I was able to say to him that in the past we achieved this and that. In the war he was also impressed by the Siberian anabasis of our legionaries. From Japan I had written to him against the Fourteen Points. Undoubtedly Wilson's change in his Austrian programme had an important effect. Lammasch writes that it was the last decisive blow against Austria-Hungary."

"When you held the Victory prize in your hands you must have had many hours of fateful pondering on what was happening in your own home or on the conflict going on there. Was there not still a Royalist Party?"

"Of course our politicians at home could not be so independent and logical as my policy abroad was. Some of our political leaders and doctrinaires believed in an Austrian victory, others expected that no decisions would be reached on the battle-fields. From the beginning I counted on the victory of the Entente and shaped my policy accordingly. On the question of what form of State we should

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adopt, some of them wanted to have a Russian prince as King of Bohemia. The Russians had been expected to come as liberators. At first, when the Russian steam-roller appeared to be coming, the women who sold geese on the market-place in Prague began to refuse to sell. 'No,' they said, 'we are keeping them for the Russians.' The Russian steam-roller got stuck. If we had taken a Russian prince as king, he would have been a kind of Winter King and would have run away from Prague after a few months, because he would have had to work, and those decadent lords are not able to do that. I was accurately informed about everything. There was no prince that we could import from Germany; and France could not send us a king. The story was told that I was negotiating with the Duke of Connaught. Never. There was no choice left us except a republic. We had no royal descendants, no pretenders, and we had always been against the ruling house. It is true that at one time General Stefanik thought of having a king, but he gave up that idea."

"And how much did you know of the preparations that were being made in Prague?"

"In this respect the Maffia worked well, and I



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was always kept informed about the chief happenings. It would be a long story if I were to tell of our secret service. Before Austria-Hungary collapsed our provisional government had been recognised by the Entente. Therefore we had our recognised government and army abroad. From the viewpoint of international law, it was certainly a strange state of affairs, unique of its kind. Immediately after the collapse the new State was organised, the National Assembly summoned, the government constituted and the fundamental articles of the Constitution proclaimed. The policy of the foreign National Council was proclaimed. I was chosen President. The Republic was safely established. We had sufficient civil servants in all departments to carry out the administration. On the whole I do not think that there are many instances where the organisation of a reconstructed, or rather an entirely new, State was so thoroughly thought out and carried through as in this case. Not a single life was sacrificed in Prague. The Germans and the Jews were afraid that they might be thrown into the Moldau, but not a hair of one of them was touched. It indicates a very fine quality in our people that the positive joy over their

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liberation was not accompanied by the negative feeling of revenge.

“Of course you must realise that the revolution brought with it many anomalous conditions which were difficult to deal with constitutionally. For instance, we had two governments, one of which had been formed abroad and another in Prague. We had two ministers in the same department of State, and many other such things.”

“And what if you yourself had carried out the revolution in Bohemia?”

“Difficult to say. I could not have known that Vienna would go down so ignominiously. I had thought that, in memory of 1871, Foch would march to Berlin. Then I should accompany him at the head of our army. We should march by way of Dresden to Prague, I as dictator, which indeed I was after the soldiers had proclaimed me as such. At the head of 60,000 men I was master of the situation and could take quick measures to convoke parliament, everything promptly—one, two, three. I had it all thought out beforehand, and would have solved many problems peremptorily which caused us much anxiety later on and on some of which we are not yet in agreement. Then when

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everything was completed, I should have laid down the power which had temporarily been entrusted to me."

Seldom does one hear such truthful statements on the limits of democracy. The genuine character of what he said was doubly proved when I finally asked if the news that he had been chosen President came to him as a surprise.

"I was not taken by surprise and I received the news quite calmly. There was a reason and a motive for that. The reason was that I was so taken up with things which had to be done that I did not have time to think over the announcement. As I have just said, I had thought to come home together with the army. After a short dictatorship I could then retire and could use my knowledge to give advice. I had imagined to myself the parliament and government, etc. It did not come into my head to think that I would be chosen President.

"In the second place, there was the democratic turn of mind. Naturally, I thought over the Constitution that would have to be made. Now I was taken unawares by the telegraphic news of my election. Good! So you are President. Then I set to work at my new job, thinking How, What,

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When? Since the services of most important men at home had to be utilised, I began to think of all the important posts. I drew up a clear plan for the new republican organisation. On the ship crossing the Atlantic I had the peace which was necessary to reconsider matters once again and map out things. When I came to Europe I found my presidential honours in Paris and London as something quite novel. Heavens! You are President, the Head of a State. Anxiety over so great a responsibility. And now for the first time, under the aegis of Peace, the work of organising began."

He now put on his roguish expression, looked at me amusedly and said:

"To explain to you how I first became conscious of the *Presidency* I shall tell you a very unmilitary story which I have not yet told to anybody. In front of my hotel in New York there was a detachment of sailors to salute me for the first time as Supreme Head of a State on my departure aboard ship. When I heard they were there, I got out by the back door and cleared off. Of course it was an uncouth way of treating soldiers, and then they had to hurry to the boat. And there they were able to salute me aboard."



PART III

THOUGHT AND ACTION



## CHAPTER 10

### MIGHT AND MIND

IN the evening we sat before the radio and listened to the speech of a foreign statesman. For a whole hour the President sat in a stooping position in front of the instrument. Then he stood up, and said good-night casually and departed. Next morning, contrary to his custom, he appeared in his study ten minutes after the appointed time. He excused himself and said that yesterday's speech had robbed him of half his night's sleep. "I had to think over the contents of that speech," he said, "although I have long been familiar with the chief political thesis laid down in it."

"Will the opposition between outer force and intellectual enlightenment, between *Macht* and *Geist*, ever be quite superseded?" I asked. "Kant was sceptical about it, for he said it was not to be expected or to be wished that kings would become philosophers or that philosophers would become



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kings; because the possession of power inevitably prevents the free exercise of the reasoning faculty. For or against this statement—which Plato contradicts—there could be no better witness today than yourself, and that is why I return to this question at the very beginning of our talk.”

“Kant lived in the eighteenth century,” said Masaryk. “Moreover, he lived in Prussia where he had the example of King Frederick before his mind. In such circumstances he might arrive at such an opinion naturally enough. But remember that he speaks of *Gewalt* (the use of power) and not of *Macht* (power as such). And you know that this great German philosopher, despite the fact that he was a Prussian and worked in Prussia, championed the republican and democratic idea. Mill was also very outspoken against philosophic rulers, because he feared that philosophers might be rulers of the Chinese-Mandarin type. Finally, philosophers ought not to be rulers if they would be efficient exponents of political theory and statecraft.”

“I have read a profound saying by Seume, ‘A fool may be a despot but a ruler must be a wise man.’ Therefore, one may command if one does not rule.”

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He nodded assent. "Seume's formula is often varied. Many kings and emperors have left their bureaucrats or soldiers to rule—often both. And they have lorded it absolutely. But to rule means to lead; that requires more than energy."

As I found him manifestly laconic on account of the impression made upon him the previous day, I tried to bring him to concrete matters, after his own fashion. So I asked about the ruling power of presidents. "Is the elected Head of a Republic fundamentally more powerful than the hereditary monarch?"

He stroked his cheek with the index finger several times, as if to assemble his thoughts, and then he answered:

"In a Republic more depends on the Constitution, the ability of the President and the government, the political education of the citizens and the members of parliament, than in the hereditary monarchy. Often enough kings have less power than presidents—that is because they are the permanent representatives of the State. It is a logical, and I may say an aesthetic, need to have the State unified in one sovereign head. This fulfils the wish for concord and unity. It is difficult for the people

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to form a mental picture of the State without one or more permanent leaders at the head of it. A monarchy may be more democratic than a republic. There are several forms of democracy—for instance, the American and the Swiss and the French. The important matter always is how the affairs of State are conducted *de facto*. Monarchism is a systematic whole, which means that the monarch is not always sole ruler in the strict sense of the word. Together with the monarch there are the Privy Council and the State Council, with various degrees of power in law and in fact. And the system is explicitly or implicitly accepted by the citizens, so that there is a general monarchical sentiment or public opinion. The king is there by the grace of God. The system is as old as mankind. Modern republicanism and democracy are in their initial stages. In principle I am against absolutism and the permanent dictatorship; but I have to admit the relatively good aspects of absolute rulership under given historical conditions. I have already mentioned the custom of having dictators in the Roman Republic. Of course the modern republic is somewhat different from the Roman.”

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“In your own Constitution, have you yourself helped to extend the President’s power?”

He folded both his hands and laid them against the mouth and chin and visibly forced himself in his usual way to recall all the details.

“The authors of the Constitution did not provide a large measure of power for the President. In itself that was not undemocratic; but the important matter was to arrange the problem in such a way as properly to meet the domestic and foreign conditions that then existed. Of course, the same is true of the whole Constitution and the legislative code. The conditions that then existed amongst us were quite unique. I had an army, but it was abroad. I was dictator and was president of the provisional government. I came home. A sort of Constitution had to be hastily drawn up so that we might have order. Good. I now saw what was going on. Several matters that I considered necessary had not been provided for, such as, for example, that the President might attend the Cabinet councils. From now on I insisted on the strictly legal exercise of power in all things and for all concerned. So the right of the President in this and other points of importance was more carefully

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determined. Up to now I have attended Cabinet councils only on two occasions. I thought everything out well. For the new State it was essential that the ministers should attend to the affairs of their respective departments. Therefore they should be guaranteed full freedom of action and their authority should not be curtailed."

"Can you promote specially talented people outside the rotation of seniority?" I asked.

"Yes, but I seldom do so explicitly. I have put in one or two ministers who were experts when parliament could not provide such experts. That is not against the Constitution because it is not stipulated that government ministers must be members of parliament. Twice we had a government that was made up of civil servants and experts. What does that signify? Because I have to sanction every promotion from the third salary grade upwards, I can influence the choice."

"And in such matters do you seek advice?"

"Naturally I speak with the ministers, publicists, journalists and experts. I get the official reports: I read the parliamentary protocols and the newspapers. I endeavour to keep myself informed about various persons and on the general situation. But

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I do not discuss questions of principle with anybody."

That sounded like a dictator's reply. But I immediately recognised the democrat once again when I asked him about his attitude towards the public at large.

"I receive many visitors from all grades of society, both foreign and domestic. Journalists come very often and I give interviews which serve a useful purpose. In other ways I often have the opportunity of bringing my views before the public. In accordance with the Constitution, I can send a message to parliament; but I am very careful and sparing in the use of that opportunity. I know men. I observe them and everything that is being done. And I leave all those whom it may concern in no doubt about the fact that I keep my eyes open. In principle, democracy means the public. Therefore I am glad to make use of the newspaper interview, though with foresight."

I was anxious to hear what he had to say about the advantages which a small State has over a great State. I believe in this myself. So I came to the question of the national language of the country, and I contrasted this national spirit with his liking

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for world literature, in the Goethean sense of that term.

“We hear the works of Czech authors highly praised, but how can we understand them? Out there in the big world nobody speaks the Czech language.”

“Differences in the size of nations, different languages and literatures, are existing facts. They are just there and they have their meaning. I have written sufficiently about poetry, also about Goethe and others. I compare our literature with the greatest. Even the smallest nation loves its native language. And rightly so. But it must learn another language also. Even the Romans learned Greek—*Vos exemplaria Græcæ nocturna versate manu, versate diurna*. The rulers of the world took their cultural education from the Greeks. Each Czechoslovak who wants to come into touch with the world learns a world language well. Even at home he uses German, Hungarian and Russian—I mean Ruthenian.”

“Outside the question of languages, do you see anything else which places small nations at a disadvantage in comparison with the great nations? Is it not time to revise the mania for becoming a Great Power?”

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“Up to now men have paid respect to what is visibly big rather than to what is smaller. This is mostly due to a materialist and mechanical turn of mind. In politics men strive after material greatness, territorial aggrandisement, colonies, etc., so we have war. A big army and a big State make a striking impression on the human mind. Imperialism always. With us here such a thing cannot now exist. Some of our kings were imperialists. Of course that was in the time when small States were prevalent, following the Roman Empire. Our kingdom for a long time extended as far as Trieste and northwards as far as Königsberg. Shakespeare was not guilty of a geographical error when he treated the King of Bohemia as a sea-coast ruler. The Magyars also lusted after imperialism, even in recent times. Thus in the evolution of history we have had the State as something different from the nation.

“On the other hand, there are the small States. As a small nation, the Jews produced the Testaments and Christianity, with the aid, of course, of the Greeks and Romans. Then, again, the Greeks were a world people, living everywhere, gifted and active, and yet were subjugated by the Romans. Is



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not our richest heritage from antiquity principally Grecian? So it comes about that a great nation and a small nation have equally influenced the world for succeeding generations. Take the case of Switzerland and Holland today, and other such countries. These small nations are extremely active and industrious. The Norwegians have a large merchant navy, and a considerable literature which deals with world themes. The problem of the small nation is to find a plan of its own to follow in everything. It must work more intensively than the great overlords who wanted to govern a sixth of the earth from Petersburg, and collapsed. The Soviets have very correctly understood the principle of autonomy and have put it into practice. On the Volga they have a German republic, with hardly 60 per cent Germans.

“And our own achievements are of world significance. The fact that we have established and are maintaining a State here in Central Europe is an indication of creative political power. In contradistinction to Lausitz and the other Slav districts in German-speaking lands, the German movement to the east and south has come up against a barrier here. Bohemia and Moravia,

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together with Silesia, were cultured countries in early times. Then the Reformation, in which the whole nation set itself against the strongest authority in the middle ages, was a great deed. The Hussite struggle under Zizka, then the Brotherhood, Comenius as the educator of the people, our cultural renaissance and the political renaissance which followed, during the world war—all this makes me feel confident that, although we are only a small State and a small nation, we have a right to our independence.

“Now let us go a little farther and consider the lesson of history. A small nation cannot preach hatred or the use of force against foreign peoples. Hence humanity. The creation of small States, the so-called Balkanisation, is less disadvantageous to Europe than the ambitions of the great States. The world war, which began by the Austrian attack on little Serbia, is one of the best proofs of this. The strengthening of democracy will help towards establishing the right relations between the Great Powers and the Small Powers. Let the big overlords argue with the Almighty as to why He did not create the great nations only but also smaller and small ones. In Europe there are five

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large States. The majority are small, and one or two medium. Therefore federation and division of labour in the cultural field between the small nations and States. The truth is that right does not depend on numbers. Politically, Europe will have to go to school again.

“I have pointed only to the problem of the large and small nations. We might compare more closely the statistical data of population, economic capacity and so on. We must also take geographical conditions into account, how far the sea and the rivers and the mountains, etc., play a part in the formation of the State. We should bear in mind the historical fact that from time to time great imperialistic States were founded, in which various languages were spoken, but those States fell to pieces. Those large States were built up by the use of force. Since the world war the large States and the small States have been able, and indeed have felt themselves obliged, to decide upon a policy of mutual peaceful relations and federation. Ethically, that means humanity on a large scale, both in domestic and foreign policy. And this again implies Geneva, the idea of Pan-Europe, etc.”

I was glad to have such a broad view of things

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put forward by a European. As I had seen the effect of nationalism also among this small people, I asked the Chief of State whether and how far the education of the people may be carried out in accordance with the ideas he had just expressed.

"The education of a people! Today there are many kinds of teachers, good and bad. Think of the mass of primary school teachers. To be a teacher," he said proudly, "that is quite a particular and difficult business. I have been through it. For a long time I was a small teacher. Difficult. I have experienced how the peasants looked down upon the teacher, who appeared to them as a beggar. In the village he was a scrivener, so as to earn a little extra. In those days the peasants were not very well able to write. The teacher often vented his power on the children. In the corner of our schoolroom there were from ten to fifteen rods. That was in the 'fifties."

"Why so many?"

"Because they were quickly used up," he said, laughing. "Caning, the old dispensation, in the country of Comenius, who called the school *officina humanitatis*, the workshop of humanity. I have had to meditate a lot on the function of the

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primary school, how far it can spread knowledge and education. The child is, of course, also subject to the formative influence of the family, the villagers and his more immediate general environment. Please remember, education is something different from schooling and knowledge. Nowadays these problems are taken more seriously than in my time."

"I have been brought up in these ideas," I said. "My father was the first man in Europe who demonstrated scientifically how much light and air were wanting in the schoolrooms. And he demanded that a school physician should be appointed, when the teaching staffs and the bureaucrats became shocked at his ideas."

"I found that a candle would not keep alight for me in the schoolroom," said Masaryk, "because the air had been exhausted by the breathing of the children."

"And in spite of all reforms," I said, "what is to me the most important has not yet taken place. Why does the teacher get the lowest pay, instead of being paid higher than all the other State officials? With good pay the best heads could be secured."

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"The teacher is better paid now," answered Masaryk. "He is freer and he may profess whatever religion he likes. Our teachers demand a High School education. They do not want the priest and the lawyer to look down upon them any more. They feel the need of a higher education. Besides the normal schools, we have already two academies for the training of teachers. Before entering these academies, the candidate must have completed the middle school course."

"All that is not enough," I said. "In my country the teacher receives the highest salary, because his responsibility is greater than even that of the judge, and for that reason the highest talent must be obtained. If thousands were not necessary, the position ought to be looked upon as one of honour. And let me come to the school-books. The teaching of history may make the future citizen a nationalist or a citizen of the world."

"I should give the teachers the salaries they demand. If I remember rightly, I once made that request. But we are not so far yet. And I do not wish to interfere *de optimo reipublicae statu* (with the excellent condition of the republic). We also have to consider the salaries paid in the other pro-

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fessions and callings. Our school-books know no enemy. I have a collection of all the school-books. There is no such thing as propaganda against anyone. Wherever errors are found they are cancelled. And the instruction books we give our soldiers are also fair in that. Think of such books of instruction in some of the other States.”

“With you is it also considered *premature* to write and teach the most recent history in an objective way?”

“That is everywhere a matter for the historians. True history presupposes the freedom of science, especially the science of writing history. My fight against the professional historians was on that ground. Under the old regime the historians and professors had no freedom and little courage. If the ordinary historian speaks of the recent decades he must consider the possibility of being prosecuted for it. For instance, how many people in Germany dared to criticise Kaiser Wilhelm? But they may write rationally about Cyrus and Caesar, etc. And the method in which this liking for ancient history is carried out is also false. Earlier times are conceived and described always according to the experiences and values of our own time.

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Mommsen's *Roman History* was written under the influence of the Prussian feeling for the State. But it is right that the whole of history, in its full development, and the movements and progress of all times should be known. With us everyone is now free. All institutions and their representatives are open to public criticism. I myself am pleased when I am criticised. And that happens. The publicists and the journalists describe and criticise the present time—therefore they are the historians of it."

Since we have here the case of a thinker in whom the supreme authority of the State is now invested, I wished today to examine his position—which he himself was also ready to explain—between statal power and spiritual power, between *Staat* and *Geist*, in practical politics. Therefore I came to the problem of Church and State, which had for a long time occupied the attention of his religious and at the same time militant nature.

"In the Republic we have not only several nations," he said, "but also several Churches. There is the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, the new Church that has been formed on



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Hussite principles, Protestants of many denominations, Jews and people who do not belong to any religious denomination. Religious liberty. I am and must act as President towards them all. Of course I demand the same liberty for the exercise of my own convictions."

"What is the significance of the Czecho-Slovak Church and the quarrel with Rome?"

"The Czecho-Slovak Church may have about 800,000 members at the present time. The number of those who profess no religion is about the same, mostly Socialists."

"Has your personal example had some effect?"

"Little. In religious questions I was always unassertive. Religion ought to be a matter for the conscience of the individual. Today the religious question is a question of religious honesty. Officially we have only problems of organisation to solve with the Vatican. The Nuntius can completely settle any matter with the government in a short while. Seeing that a portion of the Church in Hungary came under our political jurisdiction and that the Archbishop of Breslau has certain special rights here, and that *vice versa* the Archbishop of Prague has special rights in Glatz and the Bishop

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of Olmutz in Prussian Silesia, these give rise to problems of organisation and especially financial problems which have to be solved."

"Did the break with the Vatican, which lasted for three or four years, have a disturbing effect on the consciences of the Czechs?"

"I have already said that, as far as the government is concerned, our relations with the Vatican do not affect doctrinal matters. Since the Revolution brought religious freedom with it people have become accustomed to tolerance; because membership of this church or that plays no part now in appointments under the State, nor in the case of private officials either."

"Do you consider this movement as local," I asked, "or is it typical of our time?"

"Everywhere there is a striving after liberty. This is a revolutionary era. Once he is politically shaken up, the Catholic generally becomes a radical in politics; because the opposition between his Church and modern life is very strong. Hence his restlessness, as you may see it in South America and Mexico, also in Italy and Spain, in the old Austria and in Russia. In this respect the same may be said of the Orthodox Church. The Pro-

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testant has his great revolution behind him and the teaching of his Church is less foreign to modern ideas, including political ideas. In the middle ages the Pope was a generally acknowledged international authority, because men's faith was simpler and not sceptical. The situation in which the Vatican finds itself today is quite different. There is Protestantism and in all the Churches there are many formal members who tolerate a state of affairs which is not exactly to their liking. In Catholic countries separation of Church from State has become the watchword of the day."

"If you will permit me an excursion into history," I said, "how would you place this movement for the separation of Church from State in its historical perspective?"

"Over the territory and on the foundations of the Roman Empire the Church grew into a veritable theocracy and was the leading authority for all States. Considered historically, the middle age was a movement for the realisation of the theocratic principle throughout the whole social order. Science and philosophy and art, the State and its political administration, the school and education, were subordinated to the leadership of the Church.

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The chief striving of the modern age, of Humanism and the Reformation, has been towards the elimination of the Church from the various spheres of cultural activity and thus in practice the movement for the separation of the Church from the State has been helped along. The absolute State aims at controlling the whole social order and does this just as the Papacy once did. The revolutionary movement in political matters, which is being followed as a logical consequence by the ecclesiastical revolution, has its origin in all the social strata. If I advocate the separation of the Church and State, in the sense of this latest, let us say modern, development, I do not mean a separation between religion and the State but the separation of the Church as a social organisation from the State, so as to eliminate politics from religion and the Church."

"Will it be easier afterwards to bring them together in an organic collaboration?"

"Yes, but not politically, not with the instruments of power in their hands and not with full and absolute authority. If we are to have religious and moral progress," he continued, "the State must allow the religion of Jesus and His humani-

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tarian ideal full freedom of action and must effectively support it. God does not need soldiers or police. Papal Caesarism and Caesarist Papacy are not effective social organisations for our time.

“The old theocracy will be dissolved by democracy. Democracy does not mean something anti-religious.

“In this connection the American Republic is a special example, because there the Church and State are quite independent of one another, but at the same time the great masses of the people are religious and church-minded. In judging English democracy we must take the same tendency into account. It is quite otherwise with a democracy where the citizens are indifferent to religion or anti-religious and opposed to the Church. It has become an almost universal custom to consider the State in an abstract juridical way, but that is not enough, not even for democracy. In judging the significance and value of democracy we must take into account all social active forces. Then we shall understand why the Reformation and Protestantism prepared the way for modern democracy and why the Protestant peoples and States, espe-

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cially the reformed ones, are more positively democratic than the Catholic countries.

“I consider religion to be the most important and most profound social force which keeps men in organic union not only with heaven but with their fellow-men. Belief in God and immortality, in its manifold forms, supplements and governs faith in the things of this life. Religion sanctions ethics and morals and is therefore always political in some form or other. Democracy is dissolving and superseding the old theocracy historically and actually. Democracy is directly founded on morality and humanity, because morality has become the most important expression of religion. It is not anthropocracy which is the antithesis of the old theocracy. It is democracy. By this terminology I mean the natural socialisation of mankind and not egoistic individualism.”

I asked him whether new religious wars might not arise from this state of things, because I wished to bring him to the problem of war, which is the means whereby the State most effectively nullifies the power of reason. “Will the world have to bring forward new martyrs, like Huss,” I asked, “and do you think that the price of freedom of belief,

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which some Catholic States have yet to attain, is worth the while if it has to be of this kind? I think you are against martyrs."

"I have often spoken against the false yearning for martyrdom," he replied. "When a person whacks his chest and bawls out in public: 'For my people I am ready to pour out the last drop of my blood,' nobody is demanding his blood. A person ought to work for his people and his ideals instead of playing the part of a pseudo-martyr. But true martyrs like Huss must be recognised. Zizka and the Hussites rose up against and reacted against the suppression of their Leader by Emperor and Council. Defence, therefore, and not aggression. Yet they were often on the offensive too, and Zizka misused his battle-axe more than was necessary. That is always the danger with defensive tactics. A difficult task, to remain purely on the defensive."

"And yet you hold that it is possible to maintain an army purely for defensive purposes and to keep it permanently in this attitude of passive expectation. How can the soldier understand that he learns to shoot in order that he may never have to shoot directly in his life?"

The way in which Masaryk swung quite around

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in his chair, so as to sit sideways towards me, indicated that he now felt himself forced into a defensive attitude. Therefore he reverted to general principles, as he began:

“Psychologically considered, the soldier is a means of objectivisation against modern subjectivism, therefore healthy and good. Nowadays he has to do a lot of modest labour, but that brings him closer to Nature. An army can now be trained without teaching it hatred or constantly holding up ‘the hereditary enemy’ before it. The old armies were inspired by hatred, it was their sole education. Today I demand that the soldier be placed on a higher level. He must be instructed. He must understand what is meant when one speaks of a defensive war. I can point to some examples. When Austria fought against the Italians and French, in 1859, there was a soldier whose home was on the imperial estate where we lived and who had been to Italy and came back wounded. While he was ill and confined to the house I used to go to see him every day and I had him tell me his experiences of the war. He also showed me one or two pictures. In one of those pictures I saw an Austrian and on the other side a Frenchman. They



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were Generals, superintending the battle. A cannon ball came and tore the Frenchman in two pieces. The legs remained in the saddle and the upper part of the body fell off. I can still see before my mind's eye the legs enclosed in the red trousers and stuck on the saddle. But this man who had just come from the front did not know against whom he had been fighting. He believed that he had been fighting on the side of the Italians against the French. As far as learning to shoot is concerned—well, I also have always liked shooting, but at a target, and I have been delighted when I hit the bull's-eye."

Again I gazed at my interlocutor, who never grows mentally tired after hours and hours of discussion and thus makes you forget his years. There he sat and disputed with me about pacifism, and it was three-quarters of a century since he had his first experience of war. I recalled Lord Balfour, who said to me when he was eighty years old that Wellington had been his godfather. And I recalled Edison, who told me how he telegraphed the murder of Lincoln. Over against such venerability what impression can the picture of even the finest youth make! Yet I was determined not to allow

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Masaryk's years to take the place of argument, and he himself would have taken it badly too. So I quoted for him a sentence from his book on suicide, which he wrote when he was thirty years old. He then took a very strong and impassioned attitude against military service and war. The sentence in question ran thus: "Most young soldiers hate military service, because it takes them out of the surroundings in which they are accustomed to live. . . . The militarist spirit is the cause of such a marked tendency towards suicide among the soldiers. The barracks have the effect of a prison; but they have a more immoral effect, because everybody has to go through them. In the one and in the other the tendency to suicide is equally great." On the other hand, I reminded him how he had recently written the following: "I love soldiers, even though I do not like war."

When faced with this contradiction he remained quite unmoved. His love for acknowledging the truth made him state the case thus:

"I was younger then, immature, and it was to a certain extent one-sided on my part to judge everything according to the statistics of suicide. In reality I have not changed. I will uphold militarism

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of the old sort. As against three years' service in the army, we have considerably shortened the term. A militia, such as they have in Switzerland, would be too dear. During the war I hoped that this would be possible for us. It is dearer than the usual system; and nowadays how could we allow every soldier in the militia to take his rifle home with him? And what period of time is necessary for complete military training? A country lad can hardly be trained in one year. It is a question of preparatory education and personal interest. The technical problems of military science must be studied; and that makes it impossible to produce properly trained cadres in a short period of service.

"I readily admit that I do not like pacifism of the sentimental kind. I look upon the soldier as an important factor in the social and economic order, and I am trying to improve the system of military service with this end in view and to arrange it so that it will be useful training also for civil life. We have schools for the recruits, so that not merely the illiterate will learn to read and write, but also for the purpose of instructing the soldiers in the various handicrafts, entirely apart from their military instruction. This instruction in craftsman-

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ship is given by means of lectures. Great effort is made to train them in manliness. As for the rest—well, I have already given you my views on war and peace.”

“In this country also you have allowed the armament industry to remain in private hands. Do you not see any danger in that?”

“We have State industries and private industries. The latter can be bought only gradually and with the expenditure of a good deal of money. State ownership and control has also its disadvantages.”

“And all will remain on the defensive? Cannons, banks which would earn millions in war, flags, symbols. Is it possible to stay with the gun always standing by the side?”

I looked at him and recognised that he was now about to assume the offensive. “We cannot liquidate the armies,” he said emphatically, “while the neighbours have armies. Though so much suicide is reported in the newspapers it leaves people cold and indifferent, just as if they were children and did not understand. That is the most terrible of accusations against our social existence today. Count up the number of annual suicides in Europe. What a dreadful toll! And now the Great War.

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With the whole world divided into two camps, every thinking person must have asked himself what that means. And as a result we have new efforts being made to bring about disarmament and establish a policy of peace. At present, much more than before the war, we are thinking earnestly how peace can be attained. Of course there is the sacrifice! Consider the sacrifices entailed in the modern tendency to suicide, the sacrifices of human lives and human health in the factories, on the roads and railways, etc., how our unhygienic way of living cuts short the lives of millions. When I meditate on all this, war is for me only one of the institutions that rob us of human lives and bring about destruction. I condemn it just as I condemn the destruction of life in the factories. Remember you asked if a purely defensive war be possible. I have already told you something of my opposition to Tolstoi. When two parties quarrel and fight I know that it is difficult for one to remain on the defensive and just hold the aggressor at bay. But courage is not merely a physiological characteristic. It is a moral virtue which must be practised not only in war but in all human activity and conduct. How many nameless but true heroes are to

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be found in the so-called everyday life! Blustering *poseurs* are not heroes.”

He had spoken very earnestly and softly, but in a manner of driving things home. I realised, of course, that he could not disarm single-handed and that war, which made it possible for him to achieve national freedom, had appeared to him in its productive aspect. I did not contradict him any further, because I was here only to listen.

## CHAPTER II

### THE IDEAL AND THE REVOCATION

WE had come directly face to face with this question; for it must have been clear to himself that a certain feeling of disillusionment and revocation lay at the basis of his defence. I recognised indications which gave good grounds for assuming that the Philosopher and Platonist had not remained immune in his idealism after he had descended to the sensual plane of mundane things. The question I now put before him did not spring from that malicious spirit of complacency which some sceptics have shown in calling attention to Masaryk's self-contradictions. Indeed I felt quite in sympathy with him over the limited nature of human endeavour, which he himself had fully recognised. And this was the feeling that prompted me to ask him first how far he had assured himself of the security of his own State; because his annual

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messages sounded more anxious in the initial years than they did later. He answered:

“Certainly the State is more firmly consolidated today than at that time. In the beginning I was anxious. Gradually it was consolidated, became better known and more widely acknowledged. Our adversaries put too much salt in the soup and that helped us. They stretched their objections rather too far. When they were examined it was found that they were not entirely valid.

“There were cases of Czech espionage, as recently, in the Skoda Works. I concluded from this that our industries were progressive. American experts have also assured me of it.”

I came to speak of corruption and asked him what he would do if there were another case of an opposition leader and what in general he would do against corruption. He wrinkled his face and waved the long finger outwards, as if to indicate how the man would be got rid of.

“Revolution has often brought men into leading positions whose unworthiness did not become known until afterwards. The cases which you have mentioned were cleared up, even though the process was not a very easy one. Place-hunters,



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adventurers, *nouveaux riches*—that is quite understandable. The fact that the State is new explains many things. So far as is humanly possible, I personally supervise the most important matters and I put through lots of things myself. But I can only be a moral judge and almost always it is only after things have actually happened that I give my verdict. But I am not executioner. The judicial authorities often find it impossible to detect the culprits; but I go into the matter afterwards and form my own judgement. Corruption is not the monopoly of any one nation. It is to be found everywhere.”

“The Communists complain,” I said, “that their papers were prohibited because during the Tuka process they quoted from the speeches which you yourself made in the Imperial Parliament at Vienna.”

“So? But the speeches I made in those days are not an index of what will now be done. Such Communists are still too monarchically minded and make the President responsible for what the censorship does.”

“They were unable to get passports from the State officials to whom they had pointed the finger of accusation.”

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“Naturally the government cannot accede to the Communists in everything, when their behaviour is inimical to the State. Russia does not punish high treason any lighter than we do in Europe. How many persons have been executed in Russia for the crime of high treason? In comparison with that, the refusal of passports becomes only a child’s grievance.”

I came to the affair of the extradition of the Fascist deputies.

“That must be taken as contrary to your fundamental principles. If you were an Englishman, would you commend such a policy?”

“Certainly,” he said. “Extradition is today a question of expediency and not of principle. It was disgusting to see how these people, with whose opinions and conduct we were acquainted, acknowledged the State all of a sudden simply out of fear. Moreover, in these cases the President is not brought into the question. The whole affair and the men concerned in it are too little known abroad.”

“And you could not intervene?”

“I can speak with ministers and the highest officials. Take the case of Tuka, which you have

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brought forward. Tuka was found guilty of high treason and espionage. He himself admitted the high treason; but he denied the charge of military espionage. I cannot accept any person who knowingly enters into negotiations with a foreign Power against his own State. I intervene very seldom where administrative regulations are running their course and where discussions are made in accordance with them. I may have objections; but I respect the Constitution and the laws, so as not to give a bad example for others and for the future. The leading principle I follow is to let all officials depend on themselves in carrying out their various tasks. I take my age into account and know that I shall soon have to go; and I prepare for that. I am a democrat; and democracy is at once co-operation, federation and autonomy—the autonomy of each individual citizen.”

From this I came to speak of the death penalty, on which I already had occasion to become acquainted with Masaryk's fundamental idea. I often refrained from expressing my own misgivings on that point, because the furious advocates of the death penalty were ignoramuses and posed as moralists. In contradistinction to these theoretical

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opinions, Masaryk's divided feelings on the problem express themselves literally in Life or Death, now that he is Head of the State. A murderer, who, during the first years of the new State, believed that the President would not confirm any death sentence, wrote down his calculations in a letter before he committed the crime. He thought that he might have to spend some time in prison, but that after a few years he would be pardoned under an amnesty. The letter must have made an impression on the President. He now dealt with the whole problem.

"Yes," he said. "I have endorsed some death sentences, despite the fact that I am against the death penalty. The first time was very difficult. It cost me nights of sleep. I did it in the hope that in these confused and distracted times it might be helpful. I was not quite sure. Later I followed up its effect by comparing statistics of murder. And afterwards I found that the death penalty did not have a great effect, though it had some effect. To terrorise was not the chief aim. I have the feeling that many inhuman deeds cry out for expiation. I say to myself that through them the world would fall into chaos. I feel that very keenly—a Sin. And

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I think that if the murderer could think rightly he would say to himself that this is just. He must sentence himself to death. And the first time I had to endorse the sentence I sent a written communication to the person who was to be hanged and explained it to him. But they did not read him the letter. In one case the condemned man sent me a message on his own initiative, telling me that he was not angry with me. The culprit had understood that his punishment was justified."

Here he made a pause, made a quick movement of the hand in a gesture of refusal, and then added resignedly:

"I have signed many pardons and only in crass and absolutely certain cases have I given my consent."

"Do you agree that there should be a special protection for the Head of the State, as in Italy?"

"A man who attempts to take the life of the Head of a State is just like any other murderer," he said, as if surprised at my remark. "I need no special protection."

How much clearer this moralist thinks and acts, I said to myself, than some humanitarian enthusiast

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who has only abstract principles, even though these may be quite right. This problem interested me much more than the political questions which we had been dealing with. From the discussion of what happened under his own leadership, but contrary to his own ideals, I was led to speak of the Versailles Peace and I asked him whether he could not have stood up for the right against the glaring injustice embodied in the Treaty.

“The map of Europe is more justly arranged since the Versailles Treaty than formerly. A small, new State must first of all attend to its own affairs. The fact that we were to include three million Germans worried some members of the conference, as if we should cut off one and a half millions who lived in that corresponding portion of Northern Bohemia. I took up the position that in the interests of those Germans it would be better for them to be three millions than one and a half millions and said so to the Germans themselves; for, with their greater numbers, they could better protect themselves against any movement for turning them into Czechs. If we had fewer Germans in the country it would be more dangerous for them, in case they were afraid of the Czechish propaganda

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among them, which in reality is not a part of our programme. From time immemorial these Germans belonged to our State. The fact that their destinies have been linked together with ours through a long stretch of history has had a strong influence on their economic and cultural development. German culture here has not been under the predominating influence of the Nordic Prussian culture. Its association with the Slavs has enriched it. The Germans on their part have enriched the store of western civilisation among us and they have given us a good incentive in many things. The Prague school of writers is well known. I can also testify, for an earlier period, to the influence of Czech culture and history on the Germans. The first Austrian poet, Grillparzer, has written important dramas on themes taken from Czechish history. Here I should like to make a remark about the Great Powers. They have so much to look after in their big countries, and in many cases colonies also, that they cannot always devote sufficient attention to the problem of Central Europe and the Balkans. Especially with the language problem they have not a sufficiently close acquaintance. I have studied this question not merely in the abstract; but I have

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also lived it and experienced it. First of all, one must realise that each minority problem is different from the other. Hence there is no model or pattern to go by, even though equality of right may and ought to be demanded from the majority. But to grant and administer that right in practice is not such an easy matter.

“According to the traditional custom it would be out of place for me as President to speak of the various German minorities in relation to Germany; but I may at least make a few brief remarks on this question from the standpoint of political geography. As a result of its development, Germany is in the peculiar position of having German minorities in the countries that border on it. Switzerland, France, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, Austria, are now national States with small minorities. One need not fear denationalisation; for they can devote themselves to the care of their own economic and cultural interests. The *Anschluss* would be no advantage to them. It must be acknowledged that many leading writers and statesmen in Austria consider Austrian mentality and spiritual outlook as so different from the North-German that, not only in the interests of Austria



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but also in the interests of Germany, the *Anschluss* would not be advisable.

“Schönerer—I knew the man well and studied him—is not a valid example of the contrary. Once in the Vienna Parliament I had an encounter with the Pan-Germans. I have carefully followed the movement. On that occasion I quoted Lagarde, with whose *Deutsche Schriften* I was acquainted. Despite the fact that he was a theologian and should have followed the teachings of Jesus, he attacked us Czechs and also the other nationalities and demanded Germanisation by legal coercion. I sent him my arguments to the contrary. Whereby he wrote me and said that with a Masaryk he could come to terms. Naturally I said to him that it wasn’t a question of Masaryk, but that his Pan-Germanism was directed against whole nations.

“But let me continue. Switzerland is a second democratic and independent German State, where the overwhelming majority is German. The question of German minorities therefore refers to our minority here and in Poland and now also in Italy and the smaller German groups in Roumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Russia and the Baltic provinces. I do not want to read a lesson to the Ger-

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mans; but I think that two independent German States and German minorities elsewhere are culturally much more important than one German State where the parts have been mechanically assembled and therewith an attempt made to establish an impossible administrative unification of the scattered German enclaves.

“In Finland and Sweden and elsewhere—indeed in almost all States—there is a distinction between State and Nation. I consider the free minorities, which have their own cultures and their own respective languages, as a practical means towards the realisation of Pan-Europe and also the humanitarian ideal. In Geneva, Germany can lodge justifiable complaints on behalf of the German minorities; just as the other nations can lodge their complaints against the German administration. In Geneva we can speak out and state the truth. Since the foundation of our State, and for centuries previously as part of our population, our German partners have developed economically and culturally together with us, and I believe that as a real cultural minority they can do more here with us than they could in Germany for the good of the German people as a whole. But we have also Czech

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minorities in parts of Germany, especially as workmen. The German Nationalists have often been very glad to have Czechs as workmen. Formerly the Czech was more easily satisfied. You would be surprised to know how many Germans treat the Czech minorities among them in our State in the way that they were treated under the old Austria. The period of the revolution is very enlightening on this point. The Germans had four national centres; for the section in which their language is spoken is not continuous. Prague is the cultural centre also of the Germans, as you know. All their High Schools are there, their commercial centres of action, etc."

"Would you then apply the same idea to all minorities, namely, that the larger minorities fare better in foreign States?"

"Each minority must be considered according to its own special conditions; for the origin of each has been different from that of the others and so also is its relation to the majority."

"Now I should like to bring to your notice," I said, "some of the complaints which the Hungarians make. They declare that when the great landed estates were divided up the land was taken

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from the Hungarians alone and not from the Slovacks; that their numerical strength has been weakened by the manner in which the new provinces have been mapped out; that the Rakoczy Monument and other monuments and tombs have been destroyed; that their rights are trampled upon by the coercive exercise of administrative power even in those sections in which more than 20 per cent of the population is Hungarian; that they hold no professorial chairs and are not allowed to deliver lectures in Hungarian. Of course all that is against your principles."

"That I fully recognise the rectitude of the cultural claims of the Magyars who form part of our population is proved by the fact that I myself founded a type of Magyar academy. A chair for the teaching of the Magyar language and literature in the University of Bratislava is also a just and, for us, a practical demand. Provisionally we have a chair for the cultivation of Magyar-Slav relations. The further application of this policy is a matter of time.

"In Germany there is a university for every two million inhabitants. With us there is one for every three millions. But there are only 750,000 Magyars

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in our country. There is no prohibition against lectures. The complaint about the reduction of the numerical strength of the Magyar minority by administrative measures is not true. Slovackia and Bohemia and other provinces were divided into administrative districts without any consideration whatsoever for the nationality of the population. And those Magyars who can look on the matter impartially know very well that the results of the coercive Magyarisation of the Slovacks, which went on during the decades that preceded the war, have now been balanced somewhat by the natural return of these Magyarised Slovacks to their own nationality.

“It is true that in the dividing up of the great estates no land was taken from the Slovacks, for the simple reason that they did not possess any. The owners of those estates were exclusively Hungarian, Apponyi, Andrassy, etc. Rakoczy’s tomb and monument have remained untouched. The Maria Theresa Monument in Bratislava has been broken up, and also some old monuments which the Magyars had erected in commemoration of their pretended thousand-year lordship over the Slovacks. In some towns excesses may have taken place. But when

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considering all these cases it must not be forgotten that even up to the final collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire the Magyars pursued a ruthless policy of Magyarisation. I quite understand why a small nation wishes to revindicate its minorities with us, in Roumania and in Yugoslavia; but I wish that the Hungarians would make use of facts, and only facts, in their propaganda abroad.

"Let me call attention to the fact that the Magyars have a similar Slovack minority in their country even today and that no school has been allotted to this minority. With us every Magyar village has a Magyar school. The Magyar population has full freedom in regard to cultural matters and has full equality of rights. I am thankful that our republican Magyars can be a help to their own nation."

"And yet in face of such mixtures," I interrupted, "the professors are continually talking about races."

"It is unbelievable how childish many professors can be," retorted Masaryk heftily. "I remember similar curious experiences I had. All the European peoples are national mixtures, and the European States are mixtures; that is to say, they include

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more than one people, they have national minorities. Only the very tiny States, *à la* San Marino, have entirely pure nationalities. In taking the census of the population, nationalities are divided according to language. Therefore a mixed State means a State in which two or more languages are spoken as vernaculars by corresponding sections of the people. Each minority has a different historical origin from the others and the nations and languages existing in the same State are often broken up into detached units. There are enclaves. We have many German and Czech enclaves. But no reasonable Czech believes that a minority of three millions which is economically progressive and prosperous can be denationalised. The position of the Germans among us has been unique since time immemorial."

"Do you believe that present developments tend towards the formation of ethnical States?"

"Just as the national feeling is now strong, so were cultural tendencies formerly. Religion, Humanism, Enlightenment, Science, Philosophy, Art, Technical Industry, have been stronger social forces than language. For the unification of States economic interests were very powerful, also of

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course natural frontiers, mountains, etc., and the necessity for defence and security.

“By reason of the fact that, in contrast with the middle ages, the language of the people has come to be used in church services, and also by reason of the development of modern literature and the extension of the school system to the masses of the people, language has come to be very important in many branches of public life, statal administration, etc. For practical purposes it has the same significance as nationality. A glance at the historical atlas shows how the small States of the middle ages, especially in Germany and Italy, have become united to form great States. In more recent times national sentiment has become an active factor in the formation of States.

“You have asked me about the racial problem. Naturally we shall not speak here of the race and nationality problems as understood by anthropologists and ethnologists. The question refers particularly to the political problem of Pan-Germanism.

“I have steadfastly bestowed a great deal of attention on this problem of race and nationality. We Czecho-Slovacks are a very mixed people and



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the mixing goes on steadily. Anybody may observe how the mixing process is developing here. The Germans are also a very mixed people, perhaps even more so than ourselves. And history tells us how the peoples and the races have been mixed up with one another. Proper names and names of rivers and towns are examples of mixtures. And it is often said that the mixing of strains produces more efficient people than constant inter-marriage within one's own people. But the Frenchman, M. Gobineau, and the German Lagarde, obviously a French mixture, and the Austrian Schönerer, put forward their views and the Pan-German party was founded and the claim for the conservation of pure racial blood was advanced.

"I was able to observe the very beginnings of Schönerer and his work and I soon became acquainted with the German writings of Lagarde. In Vienna I came into touch with political Wagnerism, which allied itself to the Pan-German movement. It was not by mere chance that Pan-Germanism appeared in the old Austria as a political party. Eight nations were then being held under and suppressed by the German minority. Nationalities and racial mixtures are realities. The claim to un-

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mixed racial blood is theoretical. The latest German tendency in this matter came from Austria and from Schönerer. At a very early stage Pan-Germanism propounded its own philosophy of history and its policy of annexation. That was a sufficient reason for me to follow carefully the course of the movement; because in most cases our people were the first object of attack in the movement for the expansion of 'pure Germanic blood.' Together with us, and after us, came the whole of Central and Eastern Europe. Trieste and the Adriatic, with an eye to the Suez Canal, were declared to be the further stages on the road from Berlin to Bagdad. As I have already said, I carefully followed the Pan-German movement and its literature, and even during the war I wrote some essays on it in London in which I explained its aims. I know indeed that the people in Germany today who uphold the all-German standpoint declare that their theory is different from that of pre-war Pan-Germanism.

"I need not say that, from the standpoint of the humanitarian ideal, I reject the Pan-German programme of annexation. In the philosophy of history put forward by the Pan-Germans I notice the absence of scientific exactitude. For example, I

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have noticed how the authoritative programme of the new Pan-Germanism starts by speaking of *deutsches* blood and then, without noting it, jumps on to speak of the *germanische* (not *deutsche*) race. Is pure blood not also a material element? That question is important for a theory which radically renounces the materialism of Marx. This 'pure blood' talk reminds me too much of Feuerbach's saying: 'Man is what he is.' And what is the connection between blood and a philosophy of life and a general system of opinion, which are attributed as qualities of 'pure blood' and 'race'? And is a general system of opinion (*Gesinnung*) not identical with a philosophy of life (*Weltanschauung*)? Pan-Germanism demands a strong State and strong centralised power, against the 'Non-State' of today. Will such a State be developed through the medium of the presupposed 'pure blood'? Did Nietzsche's superman, the special ideal of Pan-Germanism, spring from pure German blood? I am quite well acquainted with the attempt to make Jesus an Aryan and also with the Pan-German anti-Semitism.

"If Pan-Germanism intends to create a German *Weltanschauung* and to alter Christianity and Ethics

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—in short, our whole cultural and intellectual existence—from the very foundations and thus bring about a new renaissance of the German nation, such an undertaking is certainly worth watching and studying. Here I am speaking of Pan-Germanism as a theory and not as a part of practical politics and I must insist that in its philosophy it is opposed to Goethe, Lessing, Herder, and many other great minds which Germany has produced. So far as I can see, they have taken Schiller into their service and also my favourite philosopher, Plato. They have surely no right to Plato. Nor have they any right to Schiller, as far as his philosophy is based on that of Kant. Kant and Schiller stood for political liberty and Kant for republicanism. Please forgive me. You selected the racial problem and I have gone into it without indeed adequately discussing it at all. In this matter it is not merely the Pan-German idea that comes into the foreground; for there are similar movements in other countries.

“In practice Pan-Germanism finds its *Urproblem* (its original problem) in the territorial expanses of the East, that is to say, in the policy that envisages the occupation of those territories. Hence the

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linking-up with the politics of Henry the Lion and the Prussian rulers. Berlin-Bagdad was a symbol of this yearning towards the East. Space politics form the *terminus technicus* for the occupation policy of the big ruling nations.”

“You have put the older generation of Pan-Germans in the foreground. Do you think that they were of greater importance and more powerful than the present generation?”

“In Lagarde I found the most earnest formulation of the Pan-German theory, probably because he was a theologian. Contemporary Pan-Germanism, which has taken the form of National Socialism, bases its theory on Lagarde and does not carry it any further, though expressing Lagarde’s teaching in clearer detail. Here the National Socialists have achieved a great deal. I do not agree with their practical politics; for I am a democrat and I reject the National Socialist type of political absolutism. Pardon. Go on with your inquisition.”

I had a long list to unfold, of the accusations put forward by his enemies. “Your German population,” I said, “declare that in March 1919 their incorporation into the new State was brought about under the coercion of the Czech legionaries and

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against Wilson's programme. Now, it is asked why you did not stick up for your own principles and defend Wilson against Wilson."

"Wilson's principles," he said, "like all legislative schemes, had to be so applied as to suit the real conditions that existed. And I have already pointed out that in this point Wilson himself changed his programme."

"Let us come back to the school question," I continued. "It is said that the government built Czech schools in German districts. In the German-speaking village of Fichtelbach, on the Bavarian border, it is said that the working-classes were forced to send their children to Czech schools. Between three and four thousand German school classes were closed, and two thousand Czech school classes opened instead, in German-speaking centres."

"If the factories that belong to German-speaking people want Czech workmen they must accept Czech schools," he replied. "I heard of one village in Bohemia—I do not remember the name—and I sent an official there to correct the mistake that had been made. Denationalisation is not our programme. As far as the school classes are concerned,

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the fact is that originally the Germans had disproportionately more school classes than the Czechs. That was the fruit of the Austrian policy of Germanisation. Some blunders have occurred, but I must repeat again that these did not come from our programme. The numbers which you have quoted are not correct. Since 1918 the number of primary schools in the whole Republic (not merely German schools) which have been closed amounts to about 170, thus about 1000 classes. The number of Czech minority schools is 220, with about 1500 classes."

"On the question of appointments," I said, "is it true that the Germans have lost their positions? In Karlsbad and Egger, for instance, German stationmasters have been replaced by Czechs. And Czech soldiers are quartered in German districts."

"The town of Karlsbad belongs to the district of Karlsbad," he began, in his own defence. "The important matter is that the person in charge should be reliable and efficient and that he should know both languages well and always obey the regulations. In other administrative departments we find Germans in high positions, though the districts in which they are employed are over-

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whelmingly Czech. Efficiency and loyalty to the State are the qualifications that form the guiding rule in the appointment of all officials. The regiments are mixed. Therefore Czechs, Germans and Hungarians may be found everywhere in the garrisons. From the national point of view, the army is immaculate. Even the right of voting is not accorded to the soldiers, so that there can be no party agitation among them. What more do you require?"

"International bills of lading are made out in the Czech language. And on many railway waggons the destination is written only in Czech, although they are *en route* for foreign countries and are soon over the frontier. That is something that I myself could not understand."

"International bills of lading are written in German or French, as well as in the language of the State. As regards the names of foreign places of destination written on the railway carriages, that is something I shall have to ask about. On our carriages that are destined for abroad the addresses are regularly written in four languages. What is incorrect is that the German part of our population here should single out individual instances as if they were a systematic part of our programme.



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The question is whether our national Republic is chauvinistic. Such a policy is impossible and I should never pursue it."

"Furthermore," I said, "it is declared that though 21 per cent of the soldiers are German, the Germans are not permitted to become officers. In carrying out the land reform, national instead of social and historical considerations have been decisive. Out of 7·7 million hectares of land in the southern provinces, 2·7 millions belonged to Bohemian feudal landlords and these have, for the most part, been given to Czechs. A couple of years ago there was no German official in the Land Office. Since the nationalisation of land took place the administration has been entirely Czech in the German districts of your country."

"To say the least of it, all that is exaggerated. The German-speaking farmer has his minister in the government. The other German-speaking minister is a Socialist. Nobody wants to take his German culture and language and tradition away from the German-speaking farmer. I repeat that in the army there is no friction between the various nationalities. They sing their respective songs and learn them from one another. Not a single case of

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a quarrel has come to my knowledge. The fact that one has to be careful about promotions in the army need not be explained to you if you know the particulars of the German programme.”

“There are small palliatives that could easily be applied. Why, for instance, might not the name-plates on public offices, postal stamps, etc., be printed in three languages, as is done in Switzerland? That would hurt nobody and it would please many.”

“There are already name-plates in more than one language in the case of those offices that are situated where there are grounds for taking this course. Let me compare our situation with that of Switzerland. The union of the small independent Cantons was much easier in Switzerland. Since the fourteenth century the Germans have spoken and developed their own language with us. It was in the State Chancellery of Emperor Charles IV that German as a written language originated—at least one might almost say so. When we were joined to Austria our people were oppressed in every sphere of public life by the Habsburg rulers. The Germans take much for unjust which is in reality a rectification of injustices. I am quite clear about the fact

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that it is in the interests of our State to win over the Germans to its support. If that does not take place, then part of the blame must rest with us. Absolute fairness is therefore our national programme. I know, of course, that those who have long been trained to an anti-Bohemian attitude by the old Austrian politics and administration cannot lay aside their anti-Czecho-Slovakian prejudices in the course of a few years. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same is true also of the Czechs."

"Does this interesting line of thought apply also to your own nationals who settled abroad?"

"The situation is different. The Czech emigrants sought bread and freedom and for that reason formed quite a special minority in America. The Slovak emigrants from the old Hungary could not, for the most part, either read or write, and for that reason they learned English with difficulty. In those days the Slovaks arrived in Pittsburg as if they were labelled packing-cases and were forwarded by agents, who collected them and delivered them to the coal mines. From his village to the coal mine this Slovak immigrant saw nothing of America, and then he lost sight of the sun. The children learned English on the streets, with the

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result that often they could not understand the language their parents spoke. The conditions nowadays are quite different. The independent State has brought the emigrants to a consciousness of their political dignity, and thus the social level has risen and therewith the possibility for cultural development.”

I wished to sum up and so I said: “When you look back to the time when the State was first only an abstract entity for you, and then—but still before you came to power—practically considered and weighed, as to how it could best be founded and organised, do you feel disillusioned today at the natural limits which are set to the possibility of achieving such plans? Have you retreated to the thought that even an approximately satisfactory condition of affairs cannot be reached and that men are always the same?”

He stood up and looked for a book and then said: “You spoke about Marcus Aurelius one evening recently. I am acquainted with his history and his writings. Perhaps you are right in making a comparison. But I am not a Stoic by any means; and he was in a different position. I cannot achieve all that I should like to achieve. If something

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happens which I declare to be wrong, my declaration has its effect now and for future instances also. Men who were brought up under the old regime—and not only the Czecho-Slovacks—cannot be reshaped overnight. You quoted Seume for me. In return I shall quote him for you. I think it was in Seume that I read, many years ago, the statement: ‘Men are what they always were.’ A new State cannot be completed within fifteen years. It is not merely with circumstances that I have to contend when developing my policy for this new State. In most cases the circumstances are the men—*a, b, c, d*, etc. I have to choose the government—fifteen efficient men. Therefore I choose. I have this or that opinion. But at the given moment I cannot stir up a quarrel with one or more parties. I could run the risk, of course, but I am always careful. Moreover, show me the State where the parliament can present sixteen statesmen, as a government, to the Chief of State.”

He broke off. Then he laid the hands on both eyes, after his usual manner, and went on again. In a firm voice he said:

“It has been often objected that I speak too openly. So-called political cleverness and soft pur-

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ring—well, leave that to the cat. In the long run the world judges by facts, not by words, illusions and lies. I do not speak openly on everything and I do not express my judgement at every opportunity. But when I speak I say what I think. I am now responsible for the management of this big household, not the whole but the greater part. Formerly, as professor, I could teach, speak and write. Now I have to decide and to act, and that quickly.” He made another pause, looked into the distance and then with the right arm he made an impatient gesture, as if to dismiss something. Then he said in conclusion:

“What I want to have is not yet quite clear. I want more. Because I know human nature, I accept it. I am discontented. But there is a holy discontent. I do not admit the Stoic principle of resignation, for I am a theist. I do not complain, and anyhow I have not the time for that. Difficulties are placed before us so that they may be surmounted.”

## CHAPTER 12

### AUTHORITY OR LIBERTY?

“**A**S little of the State and as much personal initiative as possible,” Masaryk began in an emphatic way, when I asked him about the Fascist principles.

“Just as in the case of Pan-Germanism, Fascism is not merely a handbook of practical politics and statal administration. It is a particular *Weltanschauung* and—well, a system of values, consequently a way of looking at life, which fundamentally means philosophy and especially ethics. The Fascist *Weltanschauung* has interested me as a matter of course and I have carefully followed its theory and politics. Mussolini has expounded the doctrine of Fascism in the Italian Encyclopedia; very interesting. On many points I am in agreement, on others I am not. Naturally we cannot here discuss Fascist politics. I only compare my democratic principles with the Fascist principles.

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“Mussolini has definitely declared himself against materialism and positivism. He emphasises the spiritual character of his view of the world and of life, without describing in any kind of detail the fundamental ideas of his philosophy. As yet he has spoken and written only on the twin concepts of State and Nation. As in every political system, Fascism is specially concerned about defining the relation of the individual to the social order. Mussolini is decidedly anti-individualist. He recognises the individual only in so far as the latter is an integral part of the State. As a historical process, the State is universal conscience and universal will. In all these points I may refer to my own analysis and refutation of Marx. Psychologically and historically, and therefore also ethically, I cannot admit that the individual conscience is merged in one universal conscience. There is no such thing as a universal conscience and there is no such thing as a universal will. There are only individual consciences. Politically there are only individuals, who are organised so as to form a social unity. This organisation may be of various kinds, also Fascist.

“As an individualist, I cannot accept the idea



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that the *Collectivum*—State, Nation, People, etc.—may be incorporated in a few or even in a single individual. I know that there are sociologists and political theorists who accept a kind of universal conscience and deny the individual conscience; but this concept is scientifically untenable. It springs from the aristocratic idea in politics.

“For Fascism the State is the true *Collectivum*. Taken in relation to the Nation and the People, the State is always primary. It forms the Nation, but the Nation does not form the State. To Fascism the State is the soul of the soul; which means that the State-conscience of the individuals—including the most prominent people, political leaders, thinkers, artists, etc.—is the sole inspiration for all their spiritual activities. The Fascist State is not merely lawgiver and political administrator, but also the guide and patron of all spiritual life. It is Discipline, which pervades and directs human nature as a whole, reason and will. This State is the supreme and sole authority. In its development it recognises no limits, for it is infinite.

“It would be quite interesting to analyse more closely these definitions and aims of this Fascist

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ultra-statism. I note only that they are products of the imagination rather than of the intellect. We read, for instance, that the Fascist State will reshape not the forms but the content of human existence—men and character and belief. To this end it must have discipline and authority, which descends into the minds of the people, and rules there without opposition. Therefore its emblem is the bundle of rods, the *fascio* of the Roman lictors, the symbol of unity, power and justice. I remember that this Fascist symbol was also the symbol of our Moravian Prince Svatopluk. As he was nearing his end he gave a bundle of rods to his son and demonstrated how he could not break the whole bundle when held together, though he might break the single rods. It was an excellent example without any pretensions.

“For Fascism, the century of democracy came to an end with the world war. A small *élite*—or, better, one person—is absolute ruler, because in him the Nation and especially the State is incorporated. In the Italian original the Fascist word for the paramount person is written UNO, in capital letters. Fascism acknowledges the monarchy in the person of its present dynastic repre-

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sentative, but the principle of hereditary monarchy is not acceptable to the Fascist leadership.

“It appears to me that the religion and Church of Mussolini’s childhood played a stronger part in shaping him than abstract political doctrines did in later life. In explaining the political programme, this factor is forgotten; and that is a great mistake. The views which are accepted in childhood from teachers whom one likes and parents whom one loves have a very strong influence because of their intimate character, because they are practised in daily life, and because they give decisive solutions of the most important problems of life and impress themselves on the mind as something that belongs to the ordinary course of things. Theological absolutism becomes political absolutism. The infallibility of the Church in its teachings, as a divine institution, is transformed into the infallibility of the State and Nation, as divine institutions. Fascism appropriates the externals of Catholicism, its symbolism, its uniform organisation, the infallible authority of its Supreme Head.

“Fascism acknowledges and supports religion, especially the Catholic religion; but this has only a tactical significance, because Fascism wishes to

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be not merely a system of government; it wishes also to have a new thought-system of its own. The two main doctrines of the Christian Faith are naturally very embarrassing to Fascism. The commandment to love one another and the universal brotherhood of mankind are declared to be Christian Utopias and the ideal of everlasting peace is energetically renounced; for life is declared to be an everlasting conflict. Hence the teaching and training of the youth in the military spirit.

“After Catholicism, polytheistic Rome is the authoritative prototype and teacher of Fascism. In the Fascist headquarters there is a Christian chapel; beside the simple altar there are flowers in memory of the fallen Fascist, Bianchi. On the Capitol there is an altar dedicated to the memory of the sacrifices which the Fascists have made. The excavations which have brought ancient Rome again into the light of day and the new aspect of the City clearly show how Fascism cultivates the spirit of the Roman legions.

“It is very questionable whether this cult of the ancient Romans can be historically grounded. The greatest Roman and Grecian philosophers preached the ideal of humanity. We have a magnificent

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collection of beautiful humanitarian utterances from the time of the Roman Empire, some of them written by the Emperors themselves. The best minds in ancient Rome combated militarist imperialism on philosophical and ethical grounds, until it was finally overcome and the Christian commandment to love the neighbour accepted and proclaimed.

“Ethics are of great importance in Fascism. The following are some excellent maxims: *We are against the easy life. Life is earnest*—and so on, and so on. But these are not new rules. I doubt very much if a new *Weltanschauung*, new world formulas, a new ethic and a new morality, can be created by a political attempt to produce politically the Nietzschean superman. The will to power is the chief doctrine of both systems, and in the sense of this voluntarism instinct, as an infallible guide, is finally placed in an authoritative position above intellect. Pan-Germanism emphasises folk and race, Fascism renounces the racial teaching; but both claim the right of expansion for the State as such, naturally territorial expansion.

“Neither Fascism nor Pan-Germanism has shaken my democratic convictions. Thereby I do

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not imply that both doctrines are identical in all particulars. I fully recognise where the differences lie. In face of every kind of imperialism, when I am confronted with the political alternative: Jesus or Caesar, I decide for Jesus. Jesus was also an expansionist; but it was the expansion of religion that he championed when he sent His disciples to preach the gospel among all nations. For many of those who believe in them, Fascism and Pan-Germanism may also mean religion. But both these systems give rise to religious reaction and retrogression; in short, a return to heathenism. As regards Pan-Germanism, I may remind you of Rosenberg and his old-German mythology; for Fascism Evota, with his imperialism, is symptomatic.

“To make an exact analysis of Fascism one must naturally consider its origin and development and bring its multifarious elements to light. I have already mentioned the influence of the Church and of the idea of the Roman imperium. Despite his opposition to Marxism, or rather just because of it, there is a good deal of Marxism in Mussolini’s political teaching. For instance, the transformation of the masses into the State, the idea of the dictator-

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ship, the idea of the historical process. I need not mention the fact that long before the advent of Fascism I wrote a refutation of Marx and pointed out where it failed. I demonstrated how closely Marxism is related to Positivism and showed how Positivism is untenable. I may also add that I dealt with Liberalism in a very critical spirit—important considerations which disclose the contradictions in these various systems.

“But you have asked me about Fascism so as to put democracy to the test in the matter of authority and liberty. I have not studied all those problems which the Fascist theory of the State puts forward. I have not gone into the question of the merits or demerits of the corporations as against the system of political parties, and many other such things. But since you have asked me if democracy acknowledges authority I say decidedly: Yes, but not without liberty.

“I have pointed to theocracy as the forerunner of democracy. That old, indeed oldest, regime acknowledged the authority of the godhead, or godheads, and held that from these the priests and rulers derived their authority. Directly or indirectly, the old and later regimes were theocratic,

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aristocratic, absolutist. Monarchy, Oligarchy, Dictatorship — Absolutism. Democracy is not absolutist. It allows criticism and is tolerant. Democracy has morality for its basis, not religion; theoretically science and philosophy, not theology. In the development of history there are many transitional stages, such as the many forms of constitutional monarchy and republics in their initial periods.

“For a long time the State appealed to the principle of divine authority as its guarantee and vindication; which means the principle of theocracy, of the ruler by Grace of God. But it is significant that in the Old Testament, which embodied the theocratical theory in its most radical form, Jehovah made a contract with His chosen people. In modern times the State, which in practice operates through its many authoritative organs and institutions, cannot claim absolute infallibility for its authoritative acts. Absolutism and the Grace-of-God principle very often led only to a system of organised chicanery; hence revolutions and the revolutionary spirit of our modern times. In practice, authority often became the *sic volo sic jubeo* of the individual. Here is the greatest and



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most dangerous rock that threatens shipwreck for all authoritative systems of government. Everyone who is able to think politically must acknowledge the principle of authority and insist upon loyalty to the authority of the State; but at the same time he will stand up for the rights of liberty. Liberty is a very important, very just and very cherished claim laid down in the political codex of the French Revolution, which is the bedrock of all modern democracy and republicanism.

“Liberty means the right of initiative in all spheres of life, especially the political sphere. First of all it signifies the right of subjecting ideas, institutions and political conduct to critical examination. Accordingly democracy must insist on the modern virtue of tolerance, so as to overcome the modern revolutionary spirit and thus obviate the necessity for a struggle on the part of democracy against old and worn-out forms of aristocracy. Instead of tolerance, one might say patience—political patience, of course. For Democracy patience is a necessary postulate.”

After Masaryk had thus declared himself against the authoritarian State, I felt that I could safely begin to criticise democracy, whose strongest repre-

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sentative I had before me. Since some of these points referred to the latest developments in Germany, I first put the question as to why democracy failed to maintain itself in that country.

"Men are creatures of habit," he answered. "Germany had been so long under the political tutorship of Prussia that the constitutional foundation and consolidation of a true democracy within the space of fourteen years was rendered very difficult. The Prussian monarchical system, which was aristocratic and based on the army, had an entirely different character from that of modern democracies. In monarchical England the parliament governs. The king is really hereditary president; therefore the English system may be taken as a form of democracy. On the Continent the king ruled by the Grace of God; therefore sustained by religion, by the respective churches. The Austrian Emperor was officially termed *Holy*. And the crown of St. Stephen is also *Holy*, just as you had the *Holy* Roman Empire of the German Nation—all survivals of the old theocratic idea. By the Grace of God; therefore chosen by God, the Ambassador, the Instrument of God, as Kaiser Wilhelm II formulated it. Monarchical France

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was styled *Most Christian*. In principle, the French and American revolutions have abolished the old regime.

“Modern democracy is young. The old regime had developed through thousands of years and had firmly established itself, whereas modern democracy originated with the French and American revolutions. Therefore it is still only developing; but the future belongs to it. Look at the map of Europe. The majority of modern States are republics or constitutional monarchies. According to the majority rule, Europe is democratic. It is nothing derogatory to democracy if I say that it is still imperfect, that there is not a complete democracy anywhere. Were the German and Austro-Hungarian and Russian monarchies perfect systems? What caused the world war? Democracy? Who lost the world war? Democracy? What brought on the economic crisis? Democracy?

“The dictatorships—wait and see how they will last. Anyhow we see that Europe is giving up the old regime. One has the feeling that today no nation would run the risk of openly accepting the old regime again, even though it may severely criticise the democratic and republican systems.

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“I must insist on the necessity of making an absolutely clear-cut distinction between democracy and anarchy. I admit that many people look on democratic liberty as anarchy. I also distinguish between negative and positive democracy. In opposing the old regime the highest democratic principles were everywhere appealed to. But once the old regime had fallen and the attempt was made to put democracy into actual practice—that is to say, political power, not by the Grace of God but by the Will of the People—then what happened was that from sheer habit much of the old regime was maintained in practice. Men are the creatures of habit. Democracy is not sovereign rule, but administration. Democracy is not merely a political system but also a *Weltanschauung*, an outlook on life, according to which each citizen as an individual must respect his fellow-citizen. Democracy signifies equality of right. The French Socialists, also Marx and Engels, were not entirely wrong in putting forward their teaching as the practical application of the Christian law of charity, the love of the neighbour. Ethically, religiously and metaphysically, I look upon democracy as founded on two leading principles: my Theism recognises each

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man as God's coadjutor; and the soul of each person, as an immortal being, is of equal worth with the soul of every other person. What is eternal cannot be indifferent towards what is also eternal. The old aristocratism looked upon men as evil or stupid, and naturally classed both together. In these cases this aristocratism led to absolutism, autocracy and dictatorship.

"I recognise the process of gradual democratisation also in the fact that during and after the war men attained positions of political leadership who were Socialists or at least had stood for social reform. I may mention Briand, Mussolini, Ebert, MacDonald. I might add that all these were men who sprang from the people and have been acknowledged by the people. And the fact that in England, Germany, Austria, with ourselves here, and in other countries, Social Democracy came into power after the war, is at least symptomatic. The setting up of a reactionary regime here and there was to have been expected. Radical changes do not reach their objective in the first attempt. That was the case with the French Republic. The reactions of various kinds which set in after revolutions are nothing new and are less of an argument against

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the programme than against its protagonists and those who are charged with the task of putting it into practice. Europe has been a political laboratory for a long time now and will continue to be so for a long time yet. That must be clear even to those who have only an elementary acquaintance with politics. We are living through a great transitional period. In all its spheres the old regime is being transformed into the new. When Mussolini and Goebbels proclaim their systems as the purest forms of democracy, I recognise therein an acknowledgment of the democracy of which I am speaking."

Masaryk had gone off along his favourite line of thought; so I tried to bring him back to the problem of the antithesis between authority and liberty. Therefore I asked him about his experience of the various forms of State Constitutions with which he was acquainted. But today he continued to dwell on the theoretical side of the question.

"I have seen and studied many States," he said. "Further, I have read books about them and I have always been a close student of political science. Democracy may be defined in many ways. On various occasions I have given some definitions myself. What is of chief importance for democracy

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is that all statal transactions would be public—no secret deals—publicity, honesty, in face of friend and foe. In a democracy every citizen of the State and every voter must be informed about all public affairs. He must have an interest in them. Hence the importance of parliament and press for a democracy. Naturally parliament and press still have their failings. The leading minds in a democratic country ought to study very profoundly and seriously the problems of reforming parliament and the press and they ought to examine their own consciences in this regard.

“People often refer to the Roman Republic and its democracy, and it is consistently declared that the principle of the dictatorship is derived from ancient Rome. But there are many forms of democracy and republics. The old Romans had their slaves. What kind of democracy was that? Their dictatorships existed during war-time; hence necessary at exceptional times. That is quite intelligible. In Russia, when they were still dazzled with their first experiences of freedom, the Bolsheviki allowed their soldiers to take a vote before a battle, and in face of the enemy, as to whether they would fight or not. That wasn't freedom. It was an

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example of incompetency, dilettantism, entirely apart from the fact that parliament and a democratic parliamentary constitution may take many forms and may operate in many different ways.

“Democracy must have its government and it is this latter that continually holds power in its hands. Parliament does not sit every day throughout the whole year. The government functions continually. It has to carry out the everyday routine work of administration and even to decide on questions of foreign policy. The government can introduce bills for new legislation. Hence the selection of ministers is important, and it is also important to study the programme they draw up and mean to put into effect. The government is the leader in parliament and in the whole State. Naturally democracy needs, just as every other form of State and government, an efficient and progressive government, men of light and learning, men of initiative, with administrative experience and broad political outlook.

“A new democratic State has its difficulties; because, of its very nature, it is bound to reckon with men of the old and new regimes. But this does not mean that democracy itself is at fault. Diffi-



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culties are to be found everywhere, in every form of State. People talk of the party system. There are parties and parties and it happens sometimes that parties lose sight of the interest of the State as a whole. I have appointed professional people as ministers. Our Constitution does not expressly state that I may choose the ministers only from among those who are members of parliament. Twice we have had here a government made up of civil servants and professional people. I shall not go into this question from the viewpoint of constitutional law. I will only say that the democratic system is sufficiently elastic to allow the adoption of exceptional means for the purpose of overcoming exceptional difficulties. Corruption? Yes. But was there no corruption under the old regime? And what is the special reason why the old regime has collapsed everywhere?

“As for parliamentarism itself—without some form of parliament, government is no longer possible in our day. Two eyes see less than four. I know that universal suffrage, with proportional representation, does not produce a body of statesmen. But parliament has its uses. The deputies keep current matters before the eyes of the govern-

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ment and the public. Then the government, or maybe one or two statesmen, will see the right lesson that is to be drawn from talks with the deputies and the speeches they make. The old monarchical system had to recognise this, and so monarchies became constitutional. That was a transitional form. Italy has maintained the Senate and Russia is a group of parliaments. Finally the level of education, both general and political, and the moral standard of the people, play an important part. There are no historical grounds for saying that the old system was morally superior. The contrary is the truth. It must also be remembered that parliament and press, freedom, criticism, have their educational effect in training the public and strengthening moral standards. Of course an American author, such as Mencken, may write a caricature of democracy; but even that exploit is democratic. In answer to all complaints against political freedom and freedom of the press, there is one means to be employed and this means has proved effective—namely, more freedom. But of course freedom does not mean freedom for anarchy to have its way, or incompetence or ignorance.”

“It is a long time,” I said, “since I have heard

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that word from the lips of a statesman. Do you consider freedom to be the school of democracy? Or what is its best school? Through the experience of managing a farm or a university, is it possible to prepare oneself for the management of a State?"

"Not always," he said. "The farm steward, the burgomeister, the professor, cannot become politician and statesman without any further training or experience. The State is organised differently from the town or county. They are analogous, of course. Towns and counties are portions of the State. The administration of them may be an educational step towards the administration of the State; but the State calls not merely for administration, bureaucracy; it also demands political capacity. And it is also not quite correct to say that the family is the best school of politics; for if it were, then the world would be full of statesmen. The State was always something different from the family. The Czar as the *Little Father* also the *Father of his Country*—these are terms based on analogy. The State, political power, is a social force that is *sui generis*. Therefore statesmanship today is, to put it briefly, an independent practical science. That statement comprises the whole

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truth. Naturally much more is needed than what can be taught and learned scientifically. The statesman must have experience and political talent. These are not purchased in an apothecary shop or in the club. Practical politics constitutes a special branch of human activity, just as technical industry and art.

“You have referred to party government. There have always been parties and there always will be parties. It may be that in our time we are embarrassed with a superfluity of wealth in this respect. But modern democracy is organically bound up with the phenomenon of increasing population and its demands. Modern individualism, which is making itself increasingly felt in religion and science and art, does not come to a standstill at the political line; and indeed it cannot. The party system and the party organisations are by no means liquidated—therefore a little patience, please. You must remember also that the party system is severely criticised, even by the parties themselves. And when we hear the parties commended in preference to the corporations, in this matter we must wait and see how the hundreds and thousands of commercial producers can be organised vocation-

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ally and politically. Parties—Corporations: they are springing up all the time. And under the old regime was the conflict—open or secret—between the numerous aristocratic castes something better and nobler than our modern party struggles? I admit that the democracies might have laid down rules for controlling the party system, and that this must be done. That all political power originates from the people is an excellent saying; but it presupposes that the electorate, the voters, are not politically indifferent and that the political power placed in the hands of the parties will be reasonably defined and that their relation to the government and the President will be clearly laid down in the law. I shall take only one problem as an instance. It is this: Money is required for the foundation and organisation of political parties. *De facto*, the parties are statal organs and in a democracy all statal functions must on principle be paid for. This is quite opposed to the aristocratic custom, with its honorary officials, where the money question, however, was by no means forgotten. Now, the question is whether the parties—and I do not mean merely the government party—ought not to be financed at the expense of the State. The

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money must be furnished somehow or other; therefore better in an honest way that will be under public supervision.

“Yes, the democratically administered and politically directed State is still imperfect. The opposite of democracy is aristocracy. This is oligarchical. The monarchical system—and the same is true of the dictatorship—is a form of political aristocratism. The real distinction between democracy and aristocracy lies in the fact that the aristocratic system allows only a very restricted right of initiative, whereas in the democratic system the right of initiative is unlimited.”

“You have mentioned all the factors that make up a democracy,” I said, “except the masses. It seems that you did not come very much into touch with them before the war.”

“Masses — a very expansive term. While a student in the secondary school, the *Gymnasium*, I used to visit the workmen’s clubs and attend their lectures. These lectures were given mostly by Christian-Socialist priests. At that time, as a secondary school student, I came to know about Marx and I conscientiously toiled through the first volume of his masterpiece. From then onwards

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I carefully followed up the whole socialist movement. And from the very start I rejected its materialism. Yes, I have written enough about that. The Masses—a word which, just like the words Nation, People, Church, State, is understood properly by few people, and misapplied by many. All collective units are organised and will be led. Were Marx, Engels and several of the others Masses?”

“Do you grant women a great role in a future democracy?”

“Even up to today I am working for equality of rights on their behalf. I do not find that women are any way inferior in intelligence, only that there are many things which they have not yet done, because they were compelled to do other things. Naturally they must first learn, as many men also will have to do. In general I believe, when I look back over history, that in all epochs men and women have contributed fifty-fifty to human development. Of a man who has failed, one often hears it said that his wife was the cause of his failure, her ambition, etc. But when I hear that I ask: Did he not choose her himself?”

“And yet you are anti-Malthusian! Or am I mistaken?”

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“Since the days of Malthus the problem of increase in population has become very important. From the eighteenth century onwards the population has been strongly on the increase everywhere and people fear that their respective countries will become over-populated. I am quite familiar with the problem. These books in the next room are scientific treatises on it. Even the *belles-lettres* of various countries are full of the problem. Birth control, to put the matter briefly. But how? To put my opinion in a few words, it is this: I am against mechanical contraceptives. I have been appalled by some of the things doctors have told me on the subject.

“In Russia I saw half-grown youths marrying before going to military service. I could easily see that it was impossible for such parents to have really sturdy children. If there were a rule that, on an average, men should marry at about the age of twenty-eight and women at about the age of twenty-four, that would be a helpful provision both from the eugenic and demographic stand-points. Naturally I recognise that the time will come when the surface of the globe will be fully occupied. What then? People will then have to



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smash one another's heads. I also know that many experts take it for granted that some measures must be adopted to prevent over-population.

"In this matter I am entirely against the principle of allowing abortion to go on unhindered, as a means of preventing over-population. Naturally there are urgent circumstances in which exceptions must be allowed. I am fully alive to the great difficulties which the whole problem presents; but I also see that the problem is not studied and thought over with the thoroughness it deserves.

"Must I add something on sexual morality? I have already dealt with that matter publicly. Here I shall only say that the ideal towards which we must strive is that both the man and the woman ought to preserve their chastity and should not have sexual intercourse outside of marriage. And the further ideal is: One man, one woman, together for life. That is a great task for the Church, the School and the Government, first for the sake of the family and then of society in general. The population problem is not merely something for doctors to deal with, but pre-eminently a moral question."

When I heard Masaryk speak so strongly against

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this national system of control, I thought of Mussolini, who spoke with me in the same way about it, but from quite different motives. He would like to see his Italians increase in number so that he might demand for them the space which is lacking today, imperialistically in a State with limited freedom. Masaryk, against his democratic principles, would curb personal freedom in this matter out of respect for the laws of Nature, ethics and romantic sentiment. The grounds on which both these men base their ideas leave me cold. As I found this case-hardened democrat so critical of parliament, corruption and the party system, I asked him finally how this democracy could be rescued from the crisis in which it is now floundering. He had his argument ready and it was, as might have been expected, of a moral nature.

“To save democracy? Crisis? Yes, but not only for democracy, also for monarchy, and Russia, a general crisis that pervades our whole transitional epoch. If parliamentarism and universal suffrage be really in such a desperate crisis, the electorate itself is in a critical situation, which means the citizens; in short, the whole social order. Apart from the fact that a crisis is only a crisis when it does not

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signify collapse, for democracy I see no danger, I see only drawbacks such as existed to a very large degree in the old regime. As I have already said, I prefer democracy to all forms of aristocracy.

“All people who teach the public and all who write are in duty bound to help towards the creation of a parliament made up of genuine and reliable people. The Soviets have more than one parliament. Their whole country is a parliament. When three men gather together in a room and do not wish to quarrel they must come to an understanding with one another. At the present time it is impossible to rule the people directly from above. In Athens the citizens assembled on the Agora. There direct government was possible. This means that all the citizens actually took part in the enacting of legislative measures. Today government has to be carried on indirectly, through the medium of elections. Therefore through ‘deputies’ and some form of parliament. And the parliament elects committees. In order to think, it is necessary to be alone. In committees questions can be worked out in detail; the parliament in full session has its special function. Therefore members of parliament should be reliable and honest men and ought

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to have had a political education. Oxenstjerna, who said, *Mi fili, nescis quantula sapientiuacula regitur* (My son, do you not know with what little wisdom the world is ruled?), was not an advocate of democracy.”

There he sat, this great democrat. Despite his strong faith in democracy, he acknowledged the mediocre success which it has achieved and which in these latter years has led us often to be sceptical of democracy. What might he think of the future? Surrounded by enemies, did the nightmare of coalition rise before his mind in sleep? I had to be careful; because men who are over eighty do not like to talk of death. I asked him about the future leadership of his own State.

“Do you mean my successor?” he asked, quite cheerily. “I know that they will compare him with myself; for I am a living tradition, a kind of president-on-approval. In the democratic system it is possible for a person to devote long years of service in the first offices of the State; not only myself, but also Benes, Premier Svehla and others. Fear of constant elections and political change is really not a feature of democracy.”

On former occasions I had spoken very highly

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of Benes with the President and found him in full agreement with me. I now asked about Benes' enemies.

"Yes, he has some. Partly he has had to drain the chalice for me. But that has no great significance. With God's Will we shall continue to work together. If my enemies find that I am lasting too long—but I don't believe I have many enemies—they might introduce a bill which would legally order my departure to the Great Beyond. But many bills don't get through. And many laws are eventually abrogated or never enforced." He spoke in a gleeful tone.

"Under such circumstances," I asked directly, "have you no fear lest the new State may not endure?"

He took up the question, although I had asked it already, and answered quickly:

"We shall soon have a political generation born under the Republic or at least educated under it. Politically they will be superior to their fathers. The Habsburgers represent no danger for us. In Europe there may be recoils on the part of the old regimes, and such recoils have already occurred. But the republican and democratic spirit cannot

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be strangled again. It cannot even be weakened. Our task was to make the new State a factor in Europe. Here Benes has achieved a great deal. This is known to everybody who has followed the proceedings at Geneva and the various conferences. Like our policy, our propaganda is reasonable and honest. And then: see how we established an independent State during the middle ages. That State endured for a long time. The anti-Reformation movement, under the Habsburgs, weakened it and, willy-nilly, we had to join in a Great Austria, together with Austria and Hungary, and thus we had to knuckle under. But in the eighteenth century the ideal of the Enlightenment Movement, and also the French Revolution, helped to strengthen our ideal of independence, and in the world war we gave proof of our political capacity. Then there was also the military efficiency shown by our legionaries. I wish you would hear our Hussite Choral sung in unison by one of our armies. Then you would understand why the leaders of the crusade organised in Germany against the Hussites ran away when they heard that song. You would also realise how we can fight in our own defence. We are not afraid. We have no anxiety.

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I have been fortunate in being able to live so long, and I hope that I shall remain in harness for some years yet."

I wish I could adequately describe the charm of manner and the air of quiet humour with which this man of such earnest thought and so many cares spoke on these unpleasant topics which I had introduced into our conversation. He spoke in a quiet undertone, moving the hands constantly, lifting them upwards in a gesture of appeal but allowing them suddenly to fall again, just as he had begun to raise them. The sentences that he had just spoken gripped me much more firmly than the long theoretical discussion. As in the case of every man who has obtained power over his fellow-men, I was anxious to know from him how he won men to his side. Even on this mysterious problem I found him ready with a clear answer.

"In the castle where my father served there were books that belonged to the Jesuits who had once lived there. I found several books among them which, I must say, I devoured. Ever since my childhood I have liked to read. In our village the curate often gave me books to read. On one of those occasions a book on physiognomy happened

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to come into my hands and I read it. It was meant for teachers. This book taught me the art of observing men systematically. That habit has remained with me ever since—interest in people. Later on, especially in Prague, I came into contact with many people and so I knew many people here and also abroad. Throughout all my experience with men I have made it a rule to be honest and open with everyone, especially with the young. I hold people in esteem and I trust their ability to think; in a word, for us all  $2 + 2$  can only be 4.”

“Do you deal with men otherwise today than in the days when your influence over them worked more in an abstract way? And do you see another class of people today?”

“In politics a knowledge of men is absolutely necessary. Especially the leaders in the political world must know with whom they have to work. They must choose the right lieutenants and allot to them those tasks which are suited to their abilities. I have already mentioned the political significance of the Christian ideal of the love of one’s neighbour. In practice this means to know men and to know one’s own relation to individuals and the mass. How can we help the neighbour if



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we have no knowledge of human character, if we are without experience and without tact? I knew a very good man who wrote much on the duty of service and philanthropy; but he never discovered that one of his close acquaintances, who was very often in his company, was almost dying of hunger. Humane statesmanship makes forbearance a necessity; for in the public life of a democratic republic there are many heads of which other people think well. Real tolerance is a democratic virtue. Formerly I often said: Do not lie and do not steal. Now I add a third precept: Have courage. On the Joseph's Platz in Vienna at the base of the monument are inscribed the words: *Justitia fundamentum regnorum* (Justice the foundation of Kingdoms). The Viennese translated the sentence: 'Just now it is raining on the foundation.' But no matter how it rains, the right formula cannot be washed away."

I now turned the conversation to the question of how he found people who kept him properly informed on public opinion.

"For that I must trust myself. I observe men everywhere and watch what is happening. I listen to the reports which other people bring. I read the newspapers daily, the most important organs of

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the party press. I receive daily reports from cabinet ministers and various officials; the heads of the diplomatic legations and consuls. From all these sources I form my judgement of things at home and abroad."

"I have read your motto: *Truth Triumphs*. That is a hope and a belief. Is there also a device for managing men?"

"I have only one rule; and that is to be straightforward with my fellow-men. I alter the old maxim and say: *Mundus vult decipi, ergo ne decipiatur* (The world likes to be deceived; therefore let it not be deceived). He spoke that fine phrase with a manly tone. Then he laughed and quickly added: "It is easy to soft-soap Herr Publicus; just for that reason it must not be done.

"In their multifarious organisations men need a leader, authority, orders, commands. And they are glad to accept them. Dictators of all kinds and denominations can vouch for the truth of that. In the democratic system also very much depends on the training for democratic initiative. Fascism and Pan-Germanism rightly lay stress on education—all right; but it is no argument for political subjection and absolutism.

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“It is said that civilisation and culture mean dominion over Nature. That may be true, if you exclude mankind from the term Nature. Nature, and especially gold, but not mankind must be held in subjection. Gold must not rule men. Unexpected gain, especially when unearned, may easily demoralise people of weak character. As it was won so is it gone.

“If you’ll allow me I shall tell you an anecdote,” he said jovially. “It was an experience I had as a boy. The episode took place in my native village. I still see a troop of youngsters and dogs coming towards me, as I went along the street. In their midst was a Slovack peasant from the next village. He was pretty well the worse for liquor and reeled from wall to wall, as we used to say. In the little lottery that we used to have in those days he had won a small prize. The unexpected stroke of luck brought him to the tavern. While there he bought himself a great supply of dried sausages which he hung round his neck and chest as if they were chains of pearls. The youngsters and the dogs were trying to nip off a few of the pearls from the chain. Often since then I have seen other men and have said quietly to myself, ‘Aha! the sausage man again.’

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“The revolutionary conditions that followed the war brought parvenus and *nouveaux riches* into prominence everywhere. It was not democracy alone. Molière was court actor to Ludwig XIV and at that time he often held up the *nouveaux riches* to scorn even at the Court itself.

“Democracy is the target for all the various kinds of aristocrats. *Liberté—Égalité—Fraternité* may hold good as the clarion cry of democracy. One might imagine that fraternity were enough; but did not Joseph’s brothers sell him, and doesn’t the history of revealed religion begin with fratricide? Equality. Men are not by nature equal. Hence aristocracy arose and misapplied this natural equality to political ends. And so the watchword, Liberty, becomes very important for democracy. Freemen can be brothers and successfully strive after equality. Men who are not free, men who are slaves, rebel and revolt. Hence our modern era. The epoch that has followed the great revolutions has been an epoch of permanent revolution. Reaction is also revolution. The reactionaries would employ Beelzebub to drive out the devil. Tragic-comedy. And then the comedy of the *Juste Milieu*, the Golden Mean. The vulgar liberalism, which

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revolution and reaction to left and right presuppose, artfully trying to maintain itself between the two extremes.

“No. I am not radical and I am not conservative. The statesman and politician who is a thinking man and who is entrusted with the leadership of the State will, in accordance with his knowledge of the present and the past, pursue a positive plan of continual improvement and continual reformation. Naturally, constant attention to details. Men deceive themselves by setting too much worth on great deeds—heroism.

“And yet, I became a revolutionary. But there are revolutions and revolutions. The revolution of the world war made our revolution necessary and justified it. Democracy does not stand for political indolence, slap-dash, waiting-on-Providence, indifference, timidity. Democracy calls for personal initiative, which refuses to be led astray by the anarchy of fools and political nincompoops—rational and honest politics. In the political world there is no royal road of progress save that of reason and honest dealing.

“I hold to the advice of Jesus, about an organic union between the wisdom of the serpent and the

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simplicity of the dove, naïveté allied with high ability and exact knowledge. Thus we should have political leaders who have more knowledge and are better educated and we should abolish political dilettantism. True democracy, not ranting and canting demagoguery. Political integrity. The best State, the best statesmanship, true democracy—where the political leaders are careful, foreseeing, and will not be taken by surprise.

“Once again I must emphasise the fact that the safeguarding of peace and the love of peace in a democratic republic does not call for aggression but for defence against both external and domestic enemies. Democracy has the right to defend itself and its State.”

## CHAPTER 13

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I KNEW that Masaryk had pondered a great deal on the problem of contemporary Russia and had examined it critically. In forming his conclusions he has had the advantage of having made a profound study of the old Russia, whereas I am better acquainted with the new Russia, which he has not seen with his own eyes since 1918. I shall take a more suitable opportunity than these pages afford me to give an account of my favourable impressions of the new Russia, as I related them to him. In order to bring him back to the former Russia, I introduced the subject of Tolstoi once again. He described the paradox of Tolstoi's life which he had observed on the occasion of many visits, how Tolstoi was always enthusiastic about the peasantry and mixed up with them, while at the same time he allowed his village to wallow in dirt, and how he tried to excuse in vain the lordly style of his own country life.

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"I wanted to show," continued Masaryk, "how disorganised he was. He was a soldier, novelist and reformer, and at the same time he bowed before the peasantry. Turgeniev said to him: 'Your peasant furs don't impress me.' When I saw him again shortly before his death he spoke a lot about Schopenhauer. For me Tolstoi typifies a noble Russian, idealistic striving for reform, linked together inorganically with the old Russian passivity. And, in spite of it all, a great artist."

"You once wrote that the curse of Czarism was that the people did not learn to work. Has not that been overcome today?"

"In all spheres of life Czarism means repression," he said. "The Church did its part in supporting Czarism. The restricted bureaucracy developed into organised inactivity. Literature was progressive and often nihilistic rather than critically constructive. As usually happens in Catholic countries, a revolutionary spirit and illegal propaganda developed. These, and their socialist counterparts, were strongly anarchical. Lenin continued this work. He woke up the Russian peasant, who must now think a little more."

"You write," I said, "that the communist ex-



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periment was possible only because of the fundamental religious conditions. I do not know whether the Soviets practise communism. I was astonished to find that it is the only country in the world where money has completely lost its sacred value."

"Lenin's Russia was not communistic. Looking at it from the economic point of view, Bolshevism is at best State capitalism. When I say that the communist experiment could succeed only on the basis of the fundamental religious conditions I am thinking primarily of the ethical side of religion. Money has no value when you can buy nothing for it. Communism as a mutual equalisation of the general misery is negative communism. Russia has not only the economical problem to deal with. Marxist materialism was a blow in the eye for Russia. I acknowledge the good which it has done, in contradistinction to Czarism. Much has been pulled down. In Russia I see a radical process of Europeanisation going on, but with the knout, after the style of Peter the Great. They begin with some measures that have the appearance of being modern, such as the children conducting their own school. That was recommended three hundred

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years ago by Comenius, but under quite different conditions. This reform had to be abolished."

"And no war of intervention in Russia?" I asked him just for the sake of irony.

"Nonsense! Ridiculous!" he answered impatiently.

"You have experienced the first weeks and months of Bolshevism. But anyone who saw Paris in 1790 would have seen the Rights of Man established through blood and terror."

"By a critical study of the period, modern historians have proved that in the French Revolution far fewer people were murdered than the opponents of the Revolution thought they had seen in their fear and rage. In France at that time there were men who were better educated and prepared for carrying out administrative measures. In Russia the masses of the people were illiterate and utterly neglected. Therefore it was only natural that they did not understand what freedom was, that they misused it and murdered on a larger scale. Take an example: In one of the villages the peasants got the *Paper*, the written order to shoot the local landlord, who was in very good relations with his peasantry. The peasants went to him and said in a

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good-natured way: 'Iwan Iwanowitsch, we must shoot you.' 'If that must be, then for God's sake give me some time to say my prayers.' He knelt down and made the Sign of the Cross in the Russian way three times. The peasants knelt down with him and crossed themselves. Then they shot him quite placidly. Was that necessary to the Marxist Revolution?"

"In the meantime, have you gained a better impression from a distance during these recent years?"

"I have seen some fine young girls who had been brought up in Soviet schools. I recognise this and many other things. If I look at it together as a whole I find good things enough, but far more of negative communism than is necessary. You have some State Socialism but much more of State Capitalism."

"And does it not impress you that here for the first time everyone is given the chance to get anywhere he wishes. I have seen 10,000 sons of working-class parents studying at the university."

"That indicates a step forward in relation to Czarist Russia. The West has a universal school education, a mass of middle schools, high schools,

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newspapers, radios, etc. With us the level of education is being raised. Look at our peasant. His son attends an agricultural school. Today the peasant must learn to be a man of business. He must keep himself acquainted with the markets, machinery, etc. We are all being drilled by the professors." He pronounced the word with a kind of cheerful irony. "Then Lenin brings this Western Marx to inoculate the Russian with historical materialism."

"As far as concerns science," I said, "the position towards God is different in Russia from what it is anywhere else."

"That is also idolatry," he exclaimed. "Idolaters do not look critically on their idol. In Kiew I have seen the catacombs where the bodies of the saints are. If the body did not begin to decay immediately, which often happened on account of the condition of the earth and the temperature, that was held to be a mark of sanctity. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same is true in regard to the embalmed Lenin. Literature, the theatre—entirely too much political propaganda. The literature introduced by Puschkin is world literature and much higher than Bolshevik literature. I admit that in other countries also great writers are coming to the fore only very sparsely."

"You have seen Russia under the cadets and under the Bolsheviks," I said further. "Do you think that Miljukov or even the Social Revolutionaries would have done better?"

"Probably yes and probably no," he answered. "They began by destroying much. Today Russia is too complicated a problem to deal with in a short discussion. I observe the new Russia and I postpone my definite judgement on it. I say only that I cannot see any communism in Russia. Certainly Marxist teaching cannot be put into practice where illiterate people are concerned; for Marx presupposes his proletarian to be a highly educated person who not only understands Hegel but is able to refute him. Leninism is an aristocratic oligarchy, not the rule of the peasant and worker. A modern Russian author says: 'The tractor will not get rid of the louse'—genuine Russian realism, which indicates very aptly the difficulties that the aristocratic Europeanising system has to face."

I realised that he did not care to be drawn out on these important problems, and so I came to speak of his own socialism. "You have written the following words: 'Always for the workman, often for socialism, seldom for Marx.' Do you by any

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chance think that the sources of this feeling are to be traced to your own origin and the humiliations suffered by your father, of which you have lately spoken?"

"I was a child of poor parents," he said. "From my childhood I have been accustomed to simplicity. If a piece of bread fell on the ground I used to take it up and press it to my lips and eat it. My father finally became steward on the imperial estate. I have had intensive experience of the way in which serving people were treated by officials. I first lived where the idea of agriculture dominated and later on I took part in village handiwork. I may say that I have remained a villager and that I think in the dialect of my village. And the simplicity of that kind of life has also remained with me. There we had no class hatred or class consciousness. I find it wrong that there should be bloated millionaires and that beside them a man dies of hunger. My wife belonged to the social-democratic party and as her collaborator I did much for the party, but I remained outside of it. Parties easily degenerate into intolerance. They become too one-sided and narrow-hearted."

"Anyhow," I said, "you have made a great ex-

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periment in the direction of State Socialism and I cannot see rightly why this State came to a halt after taking the step I speak of, although you have declared yourself in favour of the gradual nationalisation of mines and other things."

"One may well accept the principle," he said, "and then have to wait until the men arrive who are willing and able to put it into force. The land reform of which you speak, involving the abolition of the nobility, was a great revolutionary step, for hundreds of families were dependent on each member of the nobility. It was a revolution, but at the same time a revolution that was not without its defects. One cannot do everything all at once. I observe the worker together with the others. He has certain interests in common with the capitalist; for instance, that the factory should continue to work. Look at the present crisis and see how Socialism is caught up in it also. I was poor. I know what money difficulties are and I am thankful for it. I was never starving and I was always able to keep myself in a healthy condition. But what poverty brings with it, namely, the necessity to work—I experienced that at the age of fourteen. I had to support myself. To become practi-

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cal and to have to look out for tomorrow—that is a valuable experience. I do not believe in wealth.”

“What else does Socialism need today except a leader?”

“An outstanding theoretical and political leader,” he said. “I at least can see nobody who is capable of overthrowing Marxism in the theoretical field, and that is necessary. The revisionists were not strong enough. Even before the war Marxism had a very great scientific influence, especially on the professors, above all on the Germans, even on those Germans who opposed it. Today its influence is quite meagre, outside of Russia. The war showed up in a practical way the critical weakness of Marxism. I may take this opportunity of referring to the fact that at the end of the 'nineties I published a pamphlet on the critical flaw in Marxism.”

“Perhaps it was in his idol—the machine. Yet on the other side nothing has been brought forward.”

“The problem of the proper distribution of necessary goods can never be solved by the machines alone. Work is not the highest aim of mankind; it is only a means.”



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I was looking for a way out of this topic and towards others. Therefore I asked him a general question:

“If you abolish Marx and Malthus, then what are you going to do with all the men in Europe? Can the problem be solved by colonial expansion? A couple of years ago an inquiry was held in Germany in which we, a national minority, congratulated Germany on having no colonies.”

“Difficult to state what commercial value colonies have as they are administered nowadays. Before the war the German socialists always tried to prove that the Reich had to pay for them. Colonies have a certain moral effect. They stimulate the fancy. There outside lies a part of Germany. Just as stories about the Indians had the effect of inducing many boys to go to America when they grew up. Colonies imply ships and harbours, the building of machinery, industry, chemical progress, travelling and seeing the world. People learn world politics, and that is an advantage. But the disadvantage is that, to a certain extent, emigration weakens the spirit of enterprise at home and the native energy. Also because the more energetic people leave their country. And colonial adminis-

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tration has always had a deteriorating moral influence on the administrators.”

“As you place so much importance on ships and harbours, do you hold, as other nations, that an outlet to the sea is a necessity for the people? The Czecho-Slovacks, Austrians and Swiss remain almost the only inland people in Europe.”

“To meet that there is only one way—an international agreement that these countries shall have their respective harbours on the sea-coasts of other countries. As an example, we could have our harbours in Stettin and Hamburg. The Germans could use them at the same time. Our Bata, whose country has no sea-coast, bought a ship for the purpose of exporting his shoes and importing raw material. In the Europe of the future, one can foresee a general agreement that each country shall have a harbour on the sea that is nearest to it. In this connection it is quite interesting to remember that Switzerland, which has no sea-coast and is without iron and coal, has nevertheless an important industrial output.”

“And so,” I said in conclusion, “we have come at last to the point of chief importance, namely, the problem of the United States of Europe.

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Briand used to hold that Germany and France must first be united before we can think of Europe. I need not repeat to you the counter arguments which I put before him. I know that your thought is different from his."

"I do not think that the idea is by any means Utopian. Modern developments are bringing the States and their populations much closer to one another in cultural, economic and political relations. Naturally, such a great affair cannot be easily or quickly made a working reality. Provisionally we have Geneva and other international associations and treaties. We have hundreds of international associations in cultural, technical, social, hygienic and other spheres. Take good note of the fact that we have the Little Entente, which is for defensive purposes, a close collaboration between Scandinavian, Baltic and Balkan States. Soon after the war I spoke publicly in favour of such small ententes as introductory to the great European Entente. Then there are several pacts of non-aggression. All these are the beginnings of a new and more reasonable state of affairs in Europe. This Europe will effect a rational division of international work.

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“You have mentioned Briand and the relations between Germany and France. From my viewpoint it was a distinct success on the part of Briand to have spoken to Berlin after the war. I know that between the Great Powers there are many distinctly important problems which have yet to be solved. Yes. Difficulties. But I am so optimistic, as we have to call it, that I look even upon the world war as having brought the various States closer to one another. The world was then divided into two camps. On each side the States came closer to one another than before the war. The war brought men nearer to one another in Europe and Asia and it brought America to Europe, a tremendous movement of people. As a matter of fact it was an attempt to make one organisation out of the whole world. If you and I quarrel and even come to blows, as men we are at least coming close to one another. In my literary battles, when I have fought against others, I always had the feeling that we were close to each other. Of course that is too philosophical a way of looking at things; but, from the viewpoint of world history, the war ushered in the League of Nations.

“If we examine the Peace Treaty calmly and justly we must admit that Europe is more justly

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organised now than before the war, when it was possible for majorities to oppress the national minorities, when philosophers devised programmes for the extermination of whole nations, and similar attempts which belong rather to the zoological world than to human history. Yes, there are difficult problems, but everywhere I see that the efforts which are being made towards bringing about a general understanding are strong enough to warrant us in still continuing to hope that the States and the nations will be more guided by reason than heretofore."

"In the meantime what can you do with such problems as that of the fatal Corridor?"

"It is losing importance," Masaryk replied, "because the sea route keeps the Germans united, and, under certain circumstances, this is economically cheaper than the land route. Nationally the Corridor is Polish almost throughout. The Poles were partitioned into three sections by force; therefore they were politically distrustful. Yet the Poles have signed a non-aggression pact with Russia. Again a proof that old enmities can be peacefully set aside. Through its anti-Russian policy in Galicia, Austria helped the Poles to make

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progress. There are Polish industries which prove that Bismarck's anti-Polish settlement policy was useful to the Poles, and that for the settlement of Germans in that territory a certain amount of money passed over into Polish hands. A people who number millions cannot be uprooted and exiled from their native soil. Poland contains important alien minorities, and of course there are many problems yet to be solved in Eastern Europe. I know that. But I see no sufficient grounds whatsoever for wishing to solve these problems by means of the sword. The sword does not think. The restoration of Poland, just as the restoration of our own State, was a right and just thing."

"You speak of Polish minorities," I said. "In United Europe will it not be possible to do away with minorities, as in the United Swiss Cantons, by making it necessary to have all educated alike?"

"I don't think so, because it is not merely on national foundations that the States have been built up. Switzerland is a correct and magnificent model. There the language problem has been properly solved. Belgium and Finland have also found a fairly good way out of this difficulty.

"America has the English and Spanish languages,

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some French and Portuguese. The immigration from all the great countries caused a melting-pot, as America is called. For that reason it is difficult for the American to understand the European relations between States and languages. I remember a visit I had from a very highly educated North American, who was very upset because he had to show his passport several times during the same day when he was travelling through Europe and also pass through several customs examinations. 'Do you think,' I asked him, 'that the European States and peoples were founded for the comfort of American tourists? Ask the Almighty why He, in contradistinction to America, created so many States and peoples here.' He spoke of Balkanisation. I could not answer him otherwise than by saying that Europe is Europe and has a history of States and peoples which makes up a great part of the history of mankind. We naturally came to the question of small and large States. I am not sure if I made my thesis clear to him, that the worth of peoples cannot be measured by their numbers alone and that the problem of the large and small peoples and States must be looked upon and solved from the democratic standpoint, analogously with the prob-

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lem of the rich and the poorer and the poor people in the State. On the question of minorities I referred him to the Report of the Congress of Minorities."

"I shall never understand," I interrupted, "how languages can be a hindrance to unity, or how they could afford grounds for a new war. Despite all historical objections, I point to America as proof of what I think."

"I agree with you entirely on that. But in this particular America is very different from Europe."

"Therefore," I summed up, in conclusion, "if we listen to history pure and simple we must decline and fall, whereas if we listen to the voice of pure reason, despite our historical impedimenta, we shall unite."

"You know the theory that the living are ruled by the dead. Napoleon said that duffers speak of the past, wise men of the present and fools of the future—I am for autonomy, that we ought to rule ourselves, holding the dead in grateful remembrance and taking from the past only what our reason sanctions. Following the war, much was thrown overboard from the S.S. EUROPE. Probably in the hurry of it all some things were thrown overboard



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which will float again and some which the divers will have to bring up from the bottom of the ocean. But there is also much that was not thrown over which ought to have been thrown over. Reason, Reason—of course, no matter what the fools may say.”

## CHAPTER 14

### WILL AND PROVIDENCE

WE returned home in the twilight. We had come to a halt out there in the forest among the oaks, which must be some eight centuries old. One tree appeared quite cleft and crumbling; but the President pointed out that the topmost branches were still green. The reindeer came quite close to our carriage and pair of greys. They did not stop until they were within about thirty paces from us.

“These oaks,” I said, “have been favoured beyond all other trees in the forest, by reason of their sturdy health and the manner in which they are rooted, which gives them such a manifold grip in the earth and thus enables them to withstand the storm. Then there is the fact that these reindeer can browse around here. Is not all this a special protection which is bestowed on certain creatures and not on thousands of others? In the case of animals and plants which cannot fend for them-

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selves it is easy to understand that there must be some such thing as the workings of Providence.”

He was silent and sat back in the carriage. In the quickly waning light I could only dimly see the grey features. His voice lost nothing of its metallic ring, either by reason of the cold or under the influence of the theme we were now discussing.

“I was always a Theist,” he said after a while, “therefore I trust in Providence. If there be a God He must be almighty and omniscient. Therefore it is logical that the Great Spirit—or whatever He may be called—should have a plan for the world, and it could not be otherwise. It is of course a finer and greater plan and man has no business to pry into it, for he dare not place himself above God. That’s God’s business. I can’t say that I understand myself or my own life. By no means. I can only approximately fit myself in with the administrative plan of the world. The plan is not given to me as a command. Hence the problem of synergism—co-operation with God. I figure myself as God’s workman and that I am working out His plan. It is His plan on which I am collaborating. Therefore one must strive to become like God, which means that I must go in this direction as far as I under-

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stand the world and history. I never have a clearly worked out and detailed plan for the future. I have always had only an *à peu près* direction; because moments occur when different ways have to be taken." He was silent.

"The freedom of the will," I said after a pause. I spoke very briefly, so as not to break up his monologue.

"An old problem," he said, "since the time of the Greeks and especially the Stoics. The one set taught determinism, the other taught the opposite. The most diverse logical side-dances to prove indeterminism. I once studied the history of the problem. For me, determinism follows as a logical consequence from Theism. Determinism is often looked upon as fatalism. Regarding the question of determinism or indeterminism the important thing is to find the right way of facing it, to observe men in making decisions of the will, to look for the psychological antecedents of these decisions, to lay bare their motives and causes. Not merely to deduce determinism or indeterminism from Theism and act the part of God's advocate. In his *Théodicée* Leibnitz is more of a scholastic than a psychologist. Are we predetermined to punishment? Yet

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we ourselves punish *pro futuro*, terrorising in order to educate, therefore only to influence the will. Punishment is rational only when it determines the will. I recognise fatalism in determinism if my voluntary decisions and conduct happen in me and with me without cause or motive. A Stoic, I think it was Seneca, said: *Fata volentem ducunt, nolentem trahunt.*”

That masterly and familiar dictum sounded manfully in the evening air. He went on immediately:

“Without belief in Providence, without belief in an ordered universe, I could not live, nor even work for the community. I cannot say exactly by what Power, but I feel that there is a Power which drives me onwards. The logic of events is construed after the events have happened.”

“And yet you recently said,” I interrupted, “that you had mathematically worked out your plan for the founding of the new State and that you acted accordingly.”

“That does not prove anything. It is only *ex post facto* that I see the whole course of events and their logical catenation. It is like a chain of logical sequences which reveals itself to us in history, in what has passed.”

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I mentioned the influence of character on such decisions, how the lives of outstanding men have been directed more by their own inner nature than by their talents, and I put before him my ideas of genius and character. He nodded immediately when I mentioned genius and substituted the concept of intelligence for it, because he saw that I was constantly referring to his own line of thought.

"I fear that I have not much to say on the question of what constitutes character. You are acquainted, of course, with the modern study of characterology. In the abstract sphere the psychologist distinguishes between the constructive imaginative faculty, the critical faculty, feeling and the will. He divides the activity of the soul into categories. Nowadays people are beginning to look on the life of the spirit as one complete whole. Psychology is becoming concrete."

Because I found this line of thought alien to me, I reverted to the general question of belief in Providence and asked him if he remembered occasions in his earlier life wherein the hand of Providence seemed to have intervened. He answered:

"I know of one case which happened in my childhood days. We were moving from our farm.

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There remained an empty waggon standing in the upper part of the farmyard where the surface was flat. I got into the waggon and tried to set it in motion. Finally it moved. By chance there happened to be two cellars near by, each covered with a roof. The waggon ran right between them and stuck. I fell out but was unhurt. And then there was my first trip to America. In Hamburg there was a series of ships named after German authors. I sailed on the *Herder*. I had liked the name for a long time—the philosopher of humanity, good, an excellent omen. But at Le Havre there was thick fog, with the fog-horn going and bells every few minutes, like a death knell. The passengers were enjoying themselves and playing cards. I observed how anxious the captain was, and all the officers on duty. They examined the lifeboats. After some days a big storm came and the passengers nearly lost their heads with terror. When it had passed the captain said to me that the fog had been dangerous and that we might have run into another ship at any moment. Suddenly one night there was a rush of water into the cabin. I shall never forget how the people prepared themselves for death—crazy shouting, rushing here and there, fear, fear. I re-

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mained in my bunk and thought of the vast, watery grave. And it was thus that I went to my bride. The only thing that had happened was that a reserve cask of drinking water had been smashed by the rolling of the vessel. The journey lasted eighteen days instead of twelve. On her next trip the *Herder* went down. Her sister ship, the *Schiller*, was also lost. These literary ships had been badly built."

"Did you become superstitious on that account?"

He turned round, as much as to ask if I meant to be ironic, and then he said:

"Anyhow the thing occurred again during the war. When I was to go to Paris, in February 1916, for the purpose of negotiating with Briand, Benes wired me unexpectedly. Briand did not have the time to spare then and he wished that I should postpone my visit for a few weeks. I had booked my berth on the *Sussex*. And so I was saved; for the ship was torpedoed by a German submarine. I do not know whether any of the passengers were rescued. In the following year, when I had to go to Russia by way of Bergen, Stockholm and Finland, to Petersburg, we were convoyed by two other boats. One night I was thrown out of my bunk. It happened that at the crucial moment the captain



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noticed a floating mine and avoided it by suddenly reversing and swinging round. On a subsequent occasion, when I was travelling from Kiew to Moscow, the railway carriage in which we were packed together broke asunder; but nothing happened to me.

“Once in Kiew, while we were taking our mid-day meal, one of the walls of the room fell in. A shell thrown into the next room had hit it, but the shell did not explode. We had forgotten that the ultimatum issued by the Bolsheviks who had laid siege to the town expired at two o’clock, just at meal-time. Another time I was coming to our headquarters in company with my servant. We came to an open square. An officer waved us back suddenly, because there was a lot of shooting going on. I was in the middle of the square, with my servant. I thought quickly. To go back would be as dangerous as to go on. Therefore forwards! The legionaries then said that I was invulnerable; but I asked: ‘Then why was my servant also saved?’”

“Perhaps because you were there.”

“Might it not be that I was saved because he was there? God is democratic. Both myself and my servant were saved.

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“During the Lenin revolution in Petersburg I often passed through streets where there was shooting going on and came off unhurt. In Moscow I stayed at the Hotel Metropole when it was being heavily bombarded, and I could repeat many instances where my life was in danger but where I always came off unscathed.

“When I look back on these instances I have the direct feeling that I was helped from Above. In Chicago I once jumped from a tramcar on the wrong side just as there was one coming in the opposite direction. But the driver put on his brakes hard at the critical moment. That I had been very careless was fully brought home to me by the shouts of the passengers, who at that moment did not like the idea of having a mangled corpse to look at. Also the motor-man, whose strong brakes had saved me, gave me a bit of his mind. He was a bit crude, but he was right. As an excuse I explained that I was—well, a professor. But God manifestly looks after professors. He has a hard job of it.”

“If you had been killed in Russia or on the ship,” I said, “then nobody would have attributed to you this talent for State-building. Per-

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haps you were saved so that you might give proof of this."

He was silent and pensive for a while. Then he spoke softly:

"There are artistic natures which are never able to give full expression to their inner dream, and prophets who cannot state the truth they inwardly feel. Throughout my whole life I have been engaged in politics and I should have continued even if no war had come."

"But nobody would have known it for certain," I insisted.

"But I myself knew it."

At these words I was struck once again by the absolute integrity of this man, who always consults his conscience and never the world's acclaim. I now directed his attention to a final so-called accident, on which his whole line of action depended. When he was leaving Austria, in autumn 1914, they held him up at the frontier and would not let him pass. Almost with certainty it can be said that on the fate of that moment depended the to-be or not-to-be of the new State. And so I asked him if in that hour he felt himself guided by the hand of Providence.

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"I had my old passport, which was still valid, and I was travelling to Italy without a visa. The Austrian official on the Italian frontier objected to a passport which had no visa. He said that he would first have to telephone to Prague. Then for the first time in my life I claimed privilege as a member of parliament. 'I am a member of parliament and I shall not allow that.' The train was just about to start. My daughter and I jumped on to it. In that moment I did not think about Providence, but I thought that the official was right."

"And afterwards?"

"A symbol, of course. The Austrian did not permit me to go further; but I followed my course just the same, *de facto* the road to the revolution."

It had grown dark as we approached the Château, seated behind the glittering backs of the pair of grey steeds, which is a prospect that is seldom before one's eyes nowadays. A faint line broke through the dark shadows and then a pair of lights glimmered in the dusk. He looked before him and appeared to be still busy weaving the threads of the problem.

"Providence is everywhere," he said. "As a young man I went to Leipzig and there I found my

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wife. She had a powerful mind. She was cultured and she was a Puritan, but very moderate. I have learned much from her and she much from me. I brought her knowledge, but she shaped me.”

The carriage now entered the park. The soldiers clicked their heels and presented arms. The President's daughter conducted me to two simple and lightsome rooms, where her mother had spent the last years of her life. On the death mask there the suffering of the war years seemed to have left no traces. Among her husband and their three children, whom I knew at home and abroad, the spirit of this remarkable woman moved, especially in this house. I read some pages which she had written to her daughter in prison during the war. They were in German, for no other language was allowed. As I have spoken of the confidence which this man has in a guiding Providence, I shall quote here a few sentences from the mother's letter to her daughter. They express the feelings of a mother towards the daughter who, she knows, has been deprived of liberty on account of the ideas in which her father believes. The letter runs:

“It is a Sunday afternoon. There is a wind blowing. The air is full of moisture and the grey clouds

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are ready at any moment to rain. I am sitting at my table and I am thinking of you, my good child. I am ill—not more ill than usual—but that means very ill. I am lonely. My whole life was so exceptional. I have had such an infinitely strong feeling for every member of my family and my effort always was to try to have time for everybody who came to me and to give as far as I could what the soul yearned for or to answer some healthy wish. I was not pleased with my surroundings, although I saw much that was loving and good. But I found no conscious and complete philosophy of life. It was a traditional life, with some excellent things about it, but often lacking what was needed. To come down to the ground, what I found most wanting was the capacity to think religiously. I scarcely found that at all. Religious feeling, yes. But thinking, no. And still today it is unsocial to think religiously, quite calmly and logically, as one thinks over every other practical problem. . . . One must be clear and be able to say calmly: ‘I know this and I do not know that,’ because to be religious means not to be too sure of things, it means rather to feel how infinitely little we know. That creates true modesty, patience and the conviction that true knowledge can only make

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slow progress. One is satisfied with the conviction that the first time each one of us drew a breath in this world it signified that some mysterious new thing was there, and so our last breath too will introduce quite a new stage. A step and not a short one, as if one ceased to live in the dark world of the mother's bosom. Yes, greater—for we leave the corporeal and physical part behind. . . .

"I have never seen my fellow-beings in so clear a light as I see them now. For me it was always as if I had no right to look into the heart of another person, as if that were a holy place which belonged to the one person alone. . . .

"Easter is the feast of newly awakened love, after the long sleep of winter. Of course each season has its own special beauty, if men could only understand. And the bells ring and the sound penetrates to those who cannot come forth."

## CHAPTER 15

### THE HARMONY OF AGE

A BEAUTIFUL Czech woman stood by the piano and sang. Music has always been a feature of this home. It used to be the centre of all cultural interests for the mistress of the house. Today a famous prima donna had come, to forget her operas for a while and refresh herself and us with the singing of Slav folk-songs. During the interval two of Masaryk's grand-daughters and the young pianist—all of them under twenty years of age—stood by the long, black piano and leaned over the keyboard, turning the leaves of the music, chatting and laughing. The President walked slowly across the room towards them. As he came to them and looked in the music he appeared to be searching for some favourite song from his young days, which however was not in the collection before him. I did not understand the language they were using, but the gestures conveyed the meaning. I



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heard him hum the melody very softly, so as not to disturb the company on his left. Four young heads were bent in a listening attitude. Then one of them found the song and placed it on the piano and now they sang it all together, two or three stanzas. The features of the oldest person in the room brightened as if the sun shone on them. I could not say if it were the sun of youth or of age.

When we sat at our table once again and were alone together I tried to stir him up to a reminiscent mood, so that he might glance back over his long life and give me a clearer idea of the balance between its two opposite poles. He leads a life of unusual and decisive severity and he speaks of his youth in the same tone. Feeling that I had a profound thinker before me, I took the opportunity of asking whether he had suffered any disillusionments at the hands of his fellow-men. He answered in a very earnest tone:

"I deserved more thanks. I cannot blame myself. A few misunderstandings on the part of people from whom I should not have expected it. I remember only two cases of an open break with men who had been on friendly terms with me. I

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have not encountered many flatterers. They don't trust me."

He was silent and laughed to himself. Then he continued:

"Naturally I am always pleased when people like me. Then they do not flatter. This year I made an excursion in my motor car to our various towns and cities and also many of the villages. I wished"—here he made a comprehensive gesture with the hands—"to bring the whole country together before me. I wanted to know what they think of me. I observed how the teachers had prepared the youngsters. They had to shout this and that. I saw the adult public and I studied the different parties. My greatest pleasure, however, was to see my old women. When I visited a place there was often an old woman, sometimes very old, who stood apart from the official ranks and I saw her crying. I fixed my eyes on her. I gave her a greeting with the hand and she either made the Sign of the Cross on me or on herself, or she just nodded. That was a regular experience of mine from the start and it pleased me most of all. I know that an old woman has not been prepared; and when I see her stand there and cry I know what

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the Republic means. That is my spiritual barometer."

"And this love," I asked, "has it not been contradicted by disillusionment? Were there not cases in which greater caution in giving or in giving way to the call of others might not have been better? You surely had enemies, even as President."

"There is a difference between enemies and opponents. If they hurt one's feelings sometimes—well, to have one's feeling hurt is a healthy thing. The bad thing is to lose one's temper. It is just merely annoying when you find you have to deal with a stupid person. Often one must be hard. Softness is weakness and a soft person easily becomes sentimental. One must also be cruel sometimes. Incapable persons have to be set aside and they very quickly get angry about it. Some can't get the jobs they want. As far as opponents are concerned, they are people who do not agree with my views or my tactics. But I am glad when I am criticised and in all possible directions. My supreme official position? 'Give to those who ask,' said Jesus. I feel ashamed in the presence of beggars and people who come to ask for something. I feel humiliated in a peculiar way. I give what is asked

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in order to become free of those living mementoes of our imperfect social conditions. I buy myself off. A bad conscience.

“Prudent? Of course long experience has taught me to be more prudent. I take to people quickly, but I have learned to use the means at my disposal to a better end. Formerly it happened to me that I gave my winter coat to a student and then I had none for myself. With an increasing knowledge of men, one is able to make better use of one’s means. Love of the neighbour often means working or giving. Very often the neighbour comes—so.” Here he stretched out his hands, with the strong blue veins, in such a way as he himself had never done on his own behalf. “Instead of giving alms, modern social relief asks that a chance should be given to earn something or else that gifts should be made through a committee. That is good advice; but I give when they ask me. We ought to practise foresight not only in buying and selling but also in giving. I understand quite well the difference between philanthropy and the socialist demand for a legal adjustment of the social and economic disproportion. I accept that; but until this new regulation comes into force I must give. Prudence says:

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‘I like you, but all you ask of me is not justified.’” Here he paused in his reflections and said after a while: “No. In this matter long experience has not led me to waver.”

In face of such firmly anchored moral principles I drew him away to consider the usual objections which are put before those who hold power over others, so that he could deal with them in a personal way. Therefore I asked him if the State on the one side and his family on the other were not a cause of distraction.

“I have never experienced such a conflict,” he said almost astoundedly. Then he gave an ironic shrug and continued: “With kings, yes, there one finds a warped sort of life and of morals also, as I saw it during a number of years in Vienna and as one reads of it in so many biographies. Thus, for instance, it often happens that a king has to choose a wife on business principles, as often happens with the son of the peasant, just to hold on to his little bit of land and keep it among his clan. It is the same thing. But he is in the unhappy position of having power and money in his hands. He has to bow to corruption and chicanery. Once he starts on that road he goes farther. A large, expensive

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court, luxury, cabals, women, the actual or nominal ruler of an enslaved government—*L'État, c'est moi*. Here we have the old regime. In reality no work for the State can draw one away from one's family. Not in a democracy. The life of the rich banker or landed proprietor, etc., *à la* Louis XIV, is no argument against what I say."

I asked him if he remembered any personal influences which helped him in his career, such as that of his wife.

"Apart from the philosopher, Brentano, I have learned more in a negative than in a positive way from my contemporaries; but I should also say that one may learn without being influenced. I have, for example," he said, and then in his usual way he went on to practical things, "learned two very good rules from Professor Gebauer, on the occasion of the manuscript controversy, when I found it repugnant to have to reply repeatedly to the defenders of the forgery. He [Gebauer] said to me: 'Against the lie it is not enough to state the truth once. One must keep on repeating it, for the others keep on repeating their side of the case.' The same holds good for journalism. Then I learned from him—he was a philologist—to write every

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new idea and new fact, etc., on an extra page. Look, in this way——”

He took a large folder down from the bookshelf. It was divided into about forty sections, marked with tabs. On several sheets of paper which he had distributed in the various sections of this folder, he had written down ideas, excerpts, references, quotations in systematic order, some of them copied and transferred to two or three other sections. In the folder which he now held in his hand everything was about theology. In the same way he had filed administrative and political matters. “It is unpractical,” he said, “to collect ideas, notes, etc., in a copybook or diary. The single sheets can always be arranged and divided easily.” I asked him how he divided the day between matters of State and his other work.

“Early in the morning I read the newspapers. Then I deal first with so-called new business that comes in, the most important of it. I have twenty clerks in my chancellery, among them several jurists, one technician, one financial expert, and a referendary for cultural questions. They keep me fully informed. The Premier comes to visit me at least once every week, usually to dinner. When it is

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necessary I see the one or other of the departmental ministers, or their secretaries. In the city I have personal interviews whenever that is necessary. I have my own political and administrative principles and possibilities clearly before my mind. The most difficult and tiring of all is the task of making decisions. As a professor I could hold my own opinions and could 'defeat' a colleague in Berlin when there was a question of the meaning of some context in Plautus or the formation of the wing of some species of fly. But now I have to make decisions, to advise and to command. Justice, the death penalty. There is so much that one ought to know; but I must say *Yes* or *No* on the spot. I am now having a psychological experience in this respect. Decision comes from the will and the intellect together. It is much more fatiguing than searching for words in a lexicon, much more tiring than placid, systematic thinking. Moments such as that during the war when I had to decide upon the revolution stand apart by themselves. To leave wife and child, in the hope that my friends would at least provide bread for them. Everything else was a matter of attending to small details. There is no such thing as great deeds in politics. Politics



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is a matter of detailed work. But that work must be based on principles and be carried out steadily, not in leaps and bounds. Life is a chain of results achieved from day to day."

"Have you sufficient time to go on with certain work of your own?"

"One always has time," he said, with that shrewd expression on his face. "It would be a false way of talking if I said I had no time. Often one is not in the mood to write a short letter, but one has the time to do it all the same. I do not know what it is to have too much to do, one has only to find the right method. Method is almost as important as the thing itself. Since my student years I have always endeavoured to take whatever comes up new and place it in order within my general scheme. I keep in my head almost everything that interests men — concrete logic, the Russians, especially Dostojewski, religion, the philosophy of history, politics. And all these things as part of one whole. Formerly, I used to write everything myself, and now also the most of what I have to write. I do not think well when I have somebody beside me to whom I must dictate. A lot has remained unfinished; some is ready, but unpublished, because

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I do not find the time. I have just explained what that means—the revision of what has been already written down. The State comes now before everything else. Today I had the Chief of Staff and the War Minister here. A conference over technical matters. These come and the others go.”

I thought to myself that those last words might be taken by a Stoic for a motto to be inscribed on his crest. But I expressed my astonishment that while holding such an office he was able to preserve so much freedom for himself. He made a rather unpleasant face and said:

“I have to do abstract intellectual work if I am to be exact and remain exact in practical matters. From time to time I have pondered over a book or a problem and examined it critically from all sides. I consider the critical study of a novel as also part of this mental exercise. Freedom? Only at home. Formerly I used to be alone for hours and weeks. Even in the war, with my soldiers, I always had a part of the day to myself. Now? In the Castle there are the guards and the servants. If I go out, the secret service come with me. When I am going somewhere the guards are on the street. They all think that the Chief of State must be watched.”

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He seemed a little annoyed. After musing for a while he said softly:

“I often lock myself in my room so that I can be more sure of being alone. I hear the silence; and then comes to me the thought: Eternity. Now you are alone, as you will be later on, after death. In my loneliness I feel Eternity. And thus I often think of Jesus, who always went apart.”

I realised anew how this Figure must have affected him more profoundly than any other, with the possible exception of Plato; because It comes before him when he is facing decisive questions. So I quoted for him a sort of rule-of-life which he himself once laid down and called it stoical. He nodded.

“Yes, there are points of resemblance between them, the calm acceptance of everything. Only that the Christians, as Theists, trust in God or emphasise obedience to the Church; the Stoics emphasise manliness more—pride. Plato considered courage to be one of the chief virtues, and he was right. When his master, Epictetus, broke his foot he said calmly: ‘I told you that you would break your foot.’ One may accustom oneself to a kind of contemplative calm, or at least not to allow one’s feeling to be shown in the expression of the face or move-

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ments of the body. By nature I am certainly not a calm person; but I have accustomed myself to keep cool and calm in the presence of others, but this does not mean that I am actually less sensitive.

“In order to remain sound of mind and body, one must have no fear of death.”

When he had made this significant confession I asked him, and myself, whether such sensitiveness made a person more kind to others. His voice again became firm and strong as he answered:

“With the passing of the years I have become more kind and more tolerant. When I was young and therefore inexperienced I had not sufficient knowledge of men and was accordingly impatient. In my criticism of men and in my demands of them I have become more benevolent. But in my young days I was less radical, because I was afraid that I did not have enough experience for the small revolutions that took place almost daily in various spheres. As I grew older I became more radical politically. This does not mean that I am not more sympathetic with individuals, because I have come to know them more exactly. It means that I have a more radical programme. Many people often demand too much of their neighbour, and when that

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is not forthcoming to suit their expectations, then they easily grow discontented with mankind in general; instead of saying: 'You do not know the man and you have demanded of him what is not possible for him to do and which you yourself have not done.' To have patience and to be able to wait—that is very important in administration and still more important in politics. It is a great fault to be always quick to fear and to see danger ahead. In the case of politicians probably this comes from the fact that they appeal too much to the public and are always eager for acknowledgement. That is quite conceivable in the age of journalism. But look: God rules the whole cosmos; but nobody sees Him and He is not disturbed by all their acknowledgements and their contradictory prayers."

He swung round in his big chair with a sweeping movement, like that of a youngster, as if he were driving out all pessimists. Here I saw him again in his fighting mood and impatient of his patience. Therefore at the end of our conversation I reverted to the opening theme and sought again to discover his present attitude towards the chief problem of his life.

"As a Christian and also as a Stoic," I said,

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“with all the knowledge of men that you have acquired, and your patience with them, can you say definitely if philosophy be ultimately a means for the guidance of one’s conduct, or was it so for you?”

The expression on his face became very clear and I realised that *au fond* I had had before me all the time a knight with the visor off. His voice sounded in that mood too, as he answered:

“To me both are pleasing, whether I achieve something, or whether I think out some problem or acquire new knowledge. For me one cannot exist without the other. Philosophy guides me; an act is for me an act that has been thought out. I am by no means friendly to the view that for the most part all conduct arises from instinct, that it originates in the unconscious and subconscious, from feeling and will alone. I am sceptical of theories about the unrational and the irrational. I hold with Descartes, *clare et distincte*. Of course one makes attempts and fails. One is not quite clear about something and yet one has to act. Hence the need of leaders, of men who are examples of conduct—*verba docent, exempla trahunt*. My endeavour has always been to be clear about

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everything. In politics I am very critical of slogans and generalities, *round words*, as our best journalist has phrased it. In politics there are complex ideas such as State, People, Nation, the Popular Masses, Church, etc., which lend themselves to the use of generalities and big words with which the political jugglers mislead a politically immature public in their demagogical ball play.

“But,” he said, concluding this line of thought, “you have not asked me how I define philosophy: *Weltanschauung*, so the term, *World*, here implicitly means life, theoretically and practically—theory and practice, knowledge and wisdom.”

He seemed so old and wise, just like Edison. So I put him the question: whether problems in general have become clearer to him in old age. He gave me the astonishing answer:

“I believe I do not feel my age. When I analyse myself and make comparisons—I do not think so. I may be mistaken. I observe myself, if imagination or memory are on the decline, if I can still think in a sufficiently penetrating way. When I find that these faculties are breaking up, then I shall resign. Physically, of course, I cannot jump about or do athletic exercises as formerly; the bones are stiffer.

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But spiritually and mentally I do not feel old at all. I feel the joy of life as I always did. I can't say what will come later on. I am already older than Goethe was."

Once again I clearly recognised the exemplary man. "Therefore let us say, Experience," correcting myself. But he would not allow me to draw him off his line of thought.

"Any young man can have experience, if he have the right method and make use of his time; but most people waste too much of their time. Of course health has a great deal to do with it, therefore the physical constitution. Whether inherited or acquired, for me it is all the same. Naturally to live healthily one must do physical work or take physical exercise. In everything it is important to have the right method. Thinking, intellectual activity, does not make one tired. Emotional excitement is tiring, and, mark you, in intellectual activity one may experience strong emotional disturbance; one cannot find the solution of a problem and one goes wrong. Even mathematics can also tire one out. But one can achieve a great deal; and just by having method in one's work, whether mental or physical, one can preserve and prolong life."



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On that point I quoted for him a saying of Napoleon's, who called his life a ballad, and by mentioning this name, which is not a pleasing one for him, I tried to draw him into a contradiction in his way of reasoning. But the Platonist appeared immediately. Suddenly he resumed the line of the thinker, even of the romanticist. He gave himself free rein and went on with his monologue in a brighter mood.

“Constructive work, self-training, destiny: a drama! Not comedy, nor tragedy, nor *comédie humaine*. Drama, as in Shakespeare, who allowed his precious grave-digger to philosophise in the grave-yard. Humour is a wonderful gift from God. It helps one over many things. The relentless following out of a purpose is poetry. Politics and poetry linked together. Without the faculty of imagination one cannot picture anything of the future nor even of the past. One formulates and visualises one's own life. Drama, I said, is life. And everyone who lives consciously, perhaps even the smallest, has the feeling that his life is a poem through which he is living. A great drama in which we are all actors, those who have been and those who are to come.”

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I listened silently. Then I tried for the last time to lead his thought and said:

“If I made a drama of a man such as yourself, in the final act I should probably leave him doubting on the importance of what he had striven after with such great effort and finally achieved. Reaction after every success: then Faust’s question, if this be all? Then the humanist and philanthropist still, who wants to direct Europe and now directs his own particular State, who cannot fulfil his idea. Is it possible for you to carry on without being sceptical?”

He looked at me openly, brought the tips of his fingers together in his usual way, preparing to launch forth on his argument when he had made his decision. Faced with this strange question, he reverted to his Platonic principles on which he had already dwelt with such a wealth of thought.

“I distinguish between scepticism and criticism. If one will and must think truthfully, if one wants to be clear, one must take everything into consideration, think critically and judge. I cannot hide my faults from myself. I cannot hide from myself the failings of even those whom I love most. But this does not mean that I want to put

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myself forward as a paragon of virtue. I see my own shortcomings. And so it is now with my work. I see the shortcomings and I struggle against them. I bring them forward for the purpose of improving them, not in a destructive spirit. Naturally a new State has its shortcomings. I see them and I work on. For love of the thing and also for the sake of—how shall I say?—the joy which the results bring. It would surprise me if the thing which I began should go awry. Then I should say to myself: ‘You were a bungler.’ Four years abroad during the war and then—how many years?—fifteen. Therefore in all I have devoted nineteen years of my mature life to this thing. Then, as the hard-headed Czech says in his Prague dialect: *A de se! Immer durch* [Carry on].”

There was a fiery look beneath the shaggy eyebrows. I recognised the fighter even better than before. Then he laughed and suddenly said:

“Political principles have more than an ethical foundation. There is a certain amount of logical pleasure in them too—the logic of the State, of the Republic, of democracy, the logic of one’s own life. In the Cosmos I see a plan and I do not believe in chance. This plan becomes manifest in

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history. My own people here has its task to perform. It has achieved something. It has weathered great storms. And now it has won back its own State. That has a meaning. Thus it is that I make up my philosophy of history. The restoration of our freedom is for me a part of the latest development of Europe and the world. Starting with this I go further and try to grasp the meaning of this State, and of my own mission, my duty. And if things are sometimes unpleasant I do not lose courage. Therefore, forward, all God's soldiers."



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